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THE NEW AFRICA



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THE NEW AFRICA

A JOURNEY UP THE CHOBE AND DOWN
THE OKOVANGA RIVERS

A Record of Exploration and Sport

BY

AUREL SCHULZ, M.D.

AND

AUGUST HAMMAR, C.E.

*With a newly drawn Map of hitherto unexplored parts of the
Country, and Seventy Illustrations from Original Drawings
by the Authors, and Photographs*

LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1897

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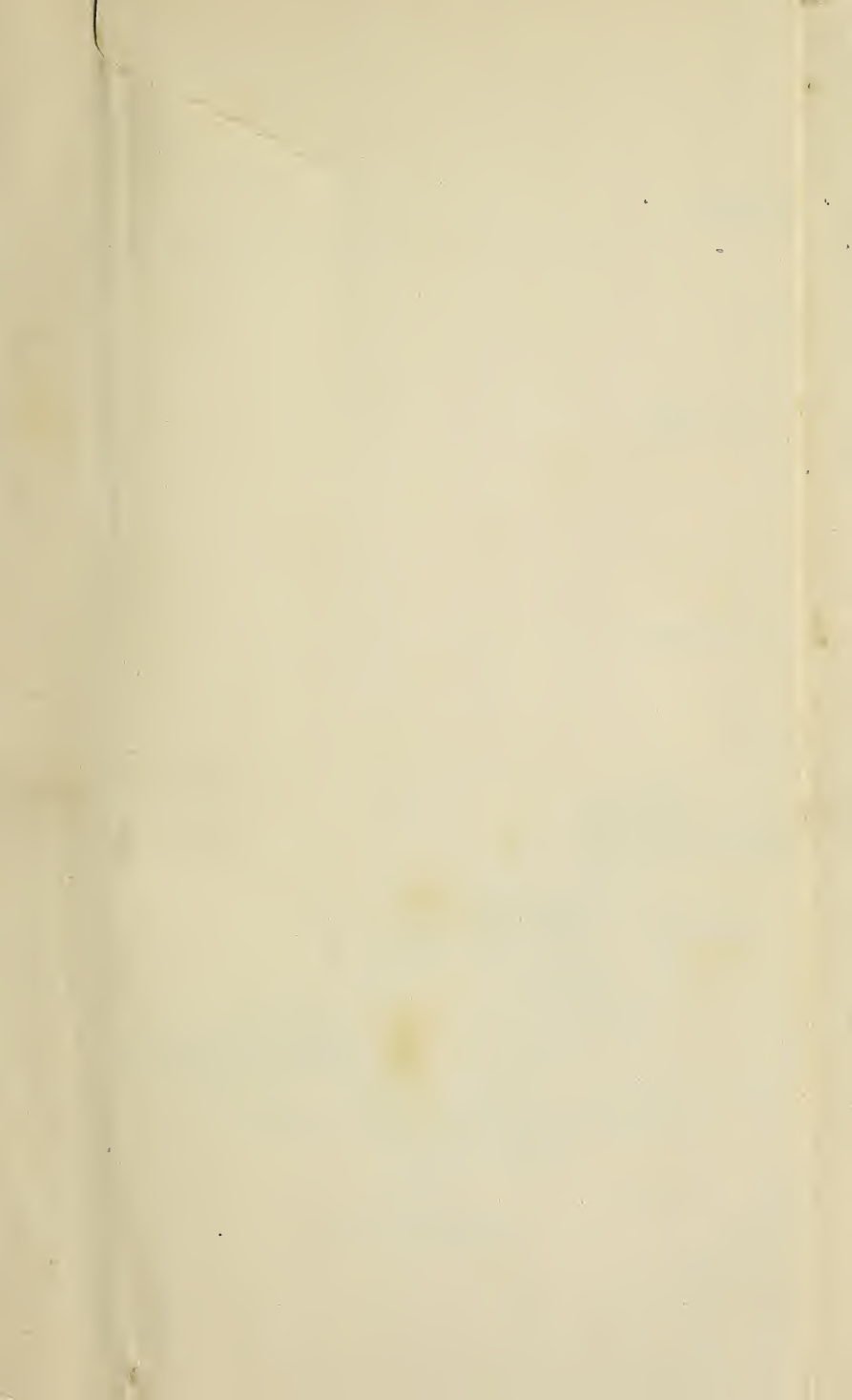
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THE NEW AFRICA

CHAPTER I

Preparation—Start from Dundee, Natal—Salted horses—Cross the Vaal river—Interview Acting-President Joubert—Rustenberg—Snakes on the Limpopo banks—Cattle stolen—King Khama in Shoshong—Engage Franz.

IN March 1884 Mr. August Hammar, C.E., and myself undertook a journey into the interior of South Africa with the object of completing the survey of the Chobe river to its sources, and generally of investigating this unknown portion of Central South Africa.¹ Of the reasons prompting us to undertake this journey it is unnecessary to speak; therefore let it suffice the reader to know that I defrayed the expenses of the whole trip out of my own pocket, excepting the personal requirements of my companion Mr. Hammar. Usually parties proceeding to the interior equip themselves with the heavy ox-wagon, drawn by sixteen or more oxen, as a means of conveyance—a lumbering, four-wheeled concern, which, although enabling one to carry supplies and necessities for a long period into the wilds, has the drawback, that for passage through untravelled bush country, such as we proposed to traverse, it is necessary often

¹ That I should bring to the notice of the reader events that transpired twelve years ago, and for that reason might be considered stale, may be justified by the explanation that since we were the first Whites to traverse this partly unknown country, no explorer has followed in our footsteps, and the regions of the central Chobe and the country we traversed from there to the Okavango still partly remain undescribed territory. Lying south of the Zambesi, and hitherto neglected as offering no material attractions, coupled with the fact of its being overrun by uncouth tribes, the country has been difficult of access to the ordinary sportsman. The increased attention devoted to South Africa of late induces me to put forward such information as we gathered, in the hope that some of the data may be of service to those who now are devoting themselves to the opening up of South Africa.

to hew a path through the trees where otherwise a two-wheeled conveyance can pass without much trouble, thus saving endless time and annoyance. Of course, with a two-wheeled cart one cannot convey the same amount of stuff as on a wagon; but as we intended to make a flying journey, and from the start had made up our minds to rough it, we decided to trust our fortunes and impedimenta to this modest, though serviceable,

conveyance, drawn by twelve picked oxen from Hammar's farm.



MR. AUGUST HAMMAR, C.E.

Our armoury consisted of eleven guns, principally Swinburne-Henry rifles taking the Martini - Henry cartridge—a weapon much used in South Africa, owing to the facilities offered for obtaining cartridges, and its sterling qualities as a long-range killer. For big game we took one 4-bore elephant gun,

necessitating fourteen drams of powder to drive its quarter-pound bullet, and one single .577 express, which, as the extractor got out of order, was subsequently left at the Zambesi, besides several other rifles. Shot guns we had of three or four different patterns. A naval chronometer, the only one available in Natal at the time, with sextant, artificial horizon, azimuth compass, etc., supplied the surveying necessities, and with a few handbooks, including a naval almanac, we felt prepared to make at least a superficial report of all that might be encountered on the trip. To save space, we only took the most necessary articles of clothing with us. We chose six good woollen shirts apiece, four pair of best moleskin trousers, and nine pair of ammunition boots

and woollen socks, which are the best footgear for work of this kind; also a couple of coats apiece. Hammar preferred to wear a helmet, while I wore a veldt hat, supplemented by a Panama straw hat, over which the veldt hat was drawn and fixed, with good ventilation holes punched through the sides, to allow the air to circulate freely over the head.

Three of the best salted horses we could get were taken along, and very useful these good beasts proved for hunting game, or going after the cattle, which often got lost among the bush-grown plots on the way up to the Zambesi. Salted horses, I should explain, are those that have passed through a disease known throughout South Africa as 'horse-sickness,' and consequently are supposed to be impervious to similar attacks in the future. It is proved, however, that horses, though they may have survived the 'horse-sickness,' are only 'salted' so far as the district in which they contracted the disease is concerned. They often die of 'horse-sickness' in other districts, although not so readily as 'unsalted horses.' The disease is very virulent, generally carrying off eighty per cent. of the attacked animals; therefore salted horses are in much demand by hunters and travellers in the lower lying, and therefore more unhealthy, parts of South Africa. The symptoms of 'horse-sickness' are high temperature, great lassitude, dulness of the eye, violent coughing, and finally frothing at the nose, with heavy dyspnœa. When these last symptoms appear the case is hopeless. The *post-mortem* appearances are frothy injection of the highly vascularised lungs, with strong serous injection of the pleura, and a black, blotchy patchiness, like splashes of ink, over the otherwise normal intestines. After the first symptoms appear, the disease runs its course in about three days, although there are some observers who declare that one can detect the disease earlier by means of the thermometer. However, as the horse generally appears to be perfectly healthy to within three days of its death, it is hardly probable that horse owners will bother themselves by taking temperatures or even have any suspicion of possible

illness before serious symptoms appear. The disease is probably zymotic, hardly infectious, appearing only in summer, on the High Flats, and is most prevalent amongst horses that are allowed to graze in the open during the night, especially if there is any dew on the grass. In fact, on a dewy, misty, hot morning it is recognised as almost a certainty that horses will contract this disease if allowed to graze outside in low-lying country; while even in valleys existing on the high lands, horses are by no means safe under these conditions. Great significance is attached by farmers to the first day of frost at the break of the seasons, for the first frost seems to aggravate any latent germs of disease in a most violent manner, and many horses die about this period. After the third day of frost the disease is practically extinct until the following summer.

It is very remarkable that this illness only attacks horses and no other animals, although these are exposed to its influence in every way. Lately it has been asserted that the microbe of this disease has been discovered by the Cape official veterinary surgeon, and that a horse properly inoculated with an attenuated preparation of microbes will not catch the sickness. As this prophylactic treatment is still in the experimental stage, it is unnecessary to go any further into the subject. The discovery, if verified, will be hailed with delighted satisfaction by the farmers throughout South Africa, who annually lose thousands of horses from this terrible disease.

All being prepared—the tents, food, medicine, etc.—and the usual paraphernalia of travel safely stowed away in the cart, we made a trial trip of our first ‘trek’ over some large stones to convince ourselves that the cart would stand the rough shocks sure to be experienced on the journey before us, and also to shake everything into position, or to expose, if possible, any flaws in our arrangements while we were still within reach of opportunities to repair them. As all was found to be in order, we made a definite start from Dundee in Natal on the 2nd of March.

Our party consisted of Mr. Hammar, the white boy Rudolf, who was to act as cook, three natives to look after the cattle and do the driving and leading and general work about camp, and myself. We crossed the Drakensberg by the famous 'Amajuba' (native for 'pigeon') mountain over Laing's Nek, and trekked across the long, rolling, grass-grown flats to the Vaal river at Standerton, without anything unusual occurring beyond losing our cattle once for a night, when they had strayed on the back track in the dark, owing to the negligence of the herd.

The Vaal river was much swollen by the rains, stopping our progress for several days, as there was no bridge to cross by, and the drift was impassable. Hammar and I found a boat, belonging to a blacksmith on the opposite side, lying idle, as there was no one who could manage it. Before long we had obtained permission to use the boat to row about on the river with, on condition that any one wishing to cross should be ferried over by us at a shilling per head for the benefit of the owner. The wily blacksmith rather overreached us by this bargain; for we found that the newly established ferry was much in request by travellers, who constantly required our services, and were often not in the best of humour at any little delay, making us aware, too, of their displeasure in no measured terms, while we, for the fun of the thing, conscientiously fulfilled our self-imposed duties, to the profit of the blacksmith, who netted over forty shillings a day from our work.

It is an interesting fact that the Vaal river, and all other rivers running west out of the Transvaal, are not inhabited by either crocodiles or eels, although fish of several species are found in great numbers.

Hearing of a 'punt,' that had just arrived, large enough to convey the cart over the river, some miles below where we were camped, we made our way there and crossed. The oxen were obliged to swim over, amidst considerable anxiety on our part, for the rapidly flowing current washed them below

the landing-place against the steep banks on the opposite side; and it was with great difficulty that we finally managed to get the lot safely ashore by swimming amongst them and twisting their tails to increase their efforts at self-preservation. Apparently dazed by the novelty of the situation, one brute got stranded on a bank in the river, and resented with his horns any attempt to dislodge him from the apparent place of safety, until Hammar, who fetched a stout stick, forced him to make another effort to join his companions on the bank, this time with a successful result; for as the beast took the water, Hammar seized his tail with both hands, and with a good wrenching twist sent him bellowing forward to the mainland.

We yoked up (inspanned) the oxen, and trekked on over the grass-grown rolling plains as before, reaching Pretoria in ten days. We passed over the east of what are now known as the Rand goldfields and Johannesburg, of course without the faintest suspicion of the enormous mineral wealth lying under our feet.

In Pretoria I interviewed the then Acting-President, Mr. Piet Joubert, with a view to passing through the country free of the usual duties imposed on all goods imported into this land of the free. In vain I argued that we were in transit, and would only use the roads for at most three weeks; but with a humorous twinkle in his fine black eyes, 'Oom Piet' assured me that as all good Boers paid duty, therefore so must I; so with the best grace at my command, I increased the Government revenue at the rate of £1 per barrel for all our guns, and four per cent. *ad valorem* on the rest of our goods, the valuation being kindly taken from my own statement. Mr. Joubert was very much interested in the objects of our expedition, and gave me a kindly hint with regard to our behaviour towards the natives, advocating forbearance and calmness on all difficult occasions—a sound piece of advice, which proved very valuable to us in the various vicissitudes of our journey.

Changing our natives, who were afraid to go any further, we

trekked on towards Rustenberg, along the western slope of the beautiful Machalisberg, famed for the good quality of its tobacco, and the decisive victory which was gained by the Boers over Umziligazi, the Matabele king, at Oliphant's Nek in 1837-38, compelling the latter to fly northward with his tribe to occupy what is now known as Matabeleland.

We here crossed the Limpopo, known as the Crocodile river near its source, which, although only the size of a large brook in England, is infested with the creatures from which it derives its name. A Boer told me that not so long ago, a man, while cross-



THE MACHALISBERG

ing the river, was pulled from his horse by a crocodile, and was killed under the eyes of his horror-stricken companions before they could drive the beast off.

Rustenberg we found to be a picturesque little village, in whose neighbourhood we were much surprised to find that pineapples and other almost tropical fruit grow to perfection, as we thought to have bidden farewell to such luxuries on the coast.

Actuated by some strange fear of passing into other countries, our natives deserted us soon after leaving Rustenberg, so that Rudolf and I were obliged to play the part of drivers and leaders ourselves, while Hammar for the time being was con-

stituted cook and stable-boy. We found, when left to our own resources, that we got on very well, although the duties attendant upon herding wilful oxen and driving lazy ones were very irksome; still, anything was preferable to sticking fast for want of help. Thus we travelled on at the rate of about twenty miles a day to Shoshong Bamangwato, the capital of King Khama's country. Small game, hitherto scarce, commenced to be plentiful in the wooded neighbourhood of the Limpopo, along whose left bank we travelled for several days. A notable feature in this district is the enormous quantities of pheasants found in the bushes, their hoarse, croaking cry filling the air in the morning and at sunset. In size equal to the European pheasant, variegated grey in colour, their chief distinction is a bare red membranous covering of the throat, and an absence of long tail feathers. I suspect that they belong to the tribe of francolines, and are not pheasants at all, although bearing the name. Hammar, while searching for a convenient spot to water the cattle on the Limpopo banks, came upon an enormous crocodile, over fifteen feet long, lying in the sun. It ran towards the river with a peculiar swinging motion of its head from side to side, which, as it has never been described before, deserves mention. Here we heard the first wolf utter its long-drawn, hungry howl one night while camped on the banks of the Notuani, an affluent of the Limpopo, and here also we found the country infested with venomous serpents to a degree necessitating the greatest caution in walking in the grass and bushes away from the road.

Lured one morning by the inviting cackle of a koorhan, a game bird of the bustard kind, living in the bush, I took my gun to hunt him up, and had hardly gone fifty yards when a hare jumped up, which I hit hard with a charge of No. 3 shot. He crawled into a hole a few yards off. While running after him, I was brought to a sudden halt by coming upon a grey cobra, quite seven feet long and three inches thick, who quietly sailed out of my path with outspread neck. I let him go, though much astonished at his size, not wishing to waste a charge over him, and went on more carefully, when a few yards

further on another cobra magnificently reared his head some three feet from the ground, and calmly looked me in the face. Watching him closely, I sidled off, when he disappeared in the brushwood and grass. Going now with the greatest care, I discovered the hare seated in an ant-bear hole, not dead as I expected, but with ears erect, and evidently in fear of something more than myself. Catching him by the ears, and drawing him out, I was surprised to see the head and body of a python come out of the hole as if to see where the hare had got to. This was too much for my nerves—three snakes in less than a minute,—so I concluded to beat a masterly retreat with all the caution warranted by the circumstances, and reached the cart without mishap. Hammar, seeing me return with only the hare, and evidently pining after the flesh of the koorhan, which was still cackling some three hundred yards off, scouted my tale of the snakes, and, taking a gun, went off to put me to shame. Hardly had he gone fifty yards, when a yell from him caused me to look round, and there was Hammar, rigid with fear, with a grey cobra standing upright in front of him, looking him in the face. Hammar shot the beast, but it is almost needless to add that the koorhan cackled on undisturbed by us. We were both convinced that it was only owing to the coolness of the early air, which greatly retards the activity of serpents, that we both escaped being attacked by these abnormally large specimens of their class.

While bathing in the Limpopo, a little further along the river, Hammar, who had gone down alone, was terribly startled by a troop of baboons, which crawled noiselessly down to the bank to watch the unusual spectacle of a naked white man bathing; and, evidently surprised by the clearness of his skin, set up such a chorus of their fierce resounding 'kwa-who kwa-who's,' that Hammar, with the predominant fear of crocodiles still in his brain, beat a hasty retreat, not knowing exactly for the moment to what cause to attribute the fearful din.

At the Notuani the expedition nearly suffered a severe check, for the cattle, straying along the road, fell in with a

white trader, Mr. T——, who had passed us with two wagons on his way down the previous evening, and who annexed the lot, and drove them off amongst his herds in the bushes. Late in the afternoon I overtook his wagon, having followed the spoor to close within a mile of his camp, and asked him if he knew anything about the oxen. He of course denied all knowledge of anything of the sort; but he seemed to be ill at ease at my inquiries and behaviour, for I insisted that he must know of their whereabouts, as they had been so close to his camp, and that I should follow him till I got them. His boys, whom I asked, also denied having seen the cattle, and I was at a bit of a loss what to do, when I espied one of his boy-herds coming from the bushes. I went over to him, and he confessed at the point of my gun that his 'boss' had driven the cattle off the road along which they were straying into his herd. Not in the best of humours, I again interviewed Mr. T——, who, now thoroughly frightened, promised me the cattle if I would go half a mile on the back track and there await them, and not come after him if he trekked on. These terms agreed upon, I off-saddled the horse that had been carrying me all day at the indicated spot, and soon had the intense satisfaction of seeing the cattle emerge from the bushes, driven by a herd, who, as soon as he saw me, made off as hard as he could into the bushes, afraid of the consequences of his master's thieving act.

All the country from Pretoria to Mongwato was more or less wooded—sparsely in some places, it is true, but increasing to actual forest along the Limpopo banks; a country formerly inhabited by large quantities of game: but now along the route anything like large game has been shot out or driven away by the traders, whose wagons constantly traffic backwards and forwards along this road, bringing out, in return for goods, troops of native cattle to be forwarded to the Kimberley market. A Mr. Musson, whom we met, had regular stopping-places along the road, where his cattle recruited from stage to stage on the journey, so that they might arrive in the market fit for slaughter.

At some of the stages large kraals were built to accommodate the cattle while they were being inoculated against the widely distributed lung disease, common to cattle in South Africa—a peculiar operation, carried out in the following manner:—A portion of a lung of a beast that has died from this sickness is allowed to decompose (some prefer it fresh), and a part of the product is then vaccinated into the root of the tail of a beast, often causing high fever and a fearful sloughing of the treated part, so severe that in some instances the tail drops completely off; while those that are fortunate enough to keep their tails through the operation have a kink that serves as a mark sufficient to be accepted as a guarantee of inoculation by the purchaser. When healed, the ox is proof against further infection of lung sickness for life. A good percentage succumb, owing to the crude manner in which this operation is carried out, but not directly from the inoculation.

At Shoshong, the white traders living there received us very cordially, especially a Mr. Whiteley, who introduced us to Khama the king.

Khama, whom we found, in marked contrast to other native rulers, to be extremely kind and gentle in manner, forbidding loud language in his presence, is a tall, slightly built man, with expressive features denoting great energy. His most obvious characteristic is a half-dignified melancholy, which is rarely surprised into vivacity. With a slight wave of his hand he dismisses the business before him when finished, no change of manner betraying the least interest or agitation, whether he condemns a criminal to death or concludes some unimportant transaction.

But we were told that he is a very demon in battle, and always the first to lead his men into a dangerous place. A characteristic tale is related of him when, as a youth, he had a frontier skirmish with Lobengula, the son of Umziligazi, the Matabele king. Both these youths displayed great courage; but Lobengula, exposing himself too freely, received a shot in the neck from Khama, which knocked him off his horse. Khama,

seizing the opportunity offered by the momentary flight of Lobengula's followers, rushed up and found Lobengula severely, but not dangerously, wounded through the fleshy part of his neck. Lobengula implored Khama to kill him; but Khama sat down and spoke kindly to him, asking why they should always fight when they met, and then helped the crestfallen Lobengula on to his horse and walked away. It was for this reason that Lobengula in after life, when asked permission by his young warriors to raid Bamangwato, always refused, and, pointing to his neck, would say, 'See this writing—"Ngwati,"—it is from my brother—a sign of our friendship.'

On hearing I was a doctor, Khama requested me to vaccinate his family and some other children, from whom he could obtain lymph to further vaccinate the tribe. Luckily we had some lymph with us, and the operation was carried out under the eaves of Khama's hut, in the presence of his wife and himself, to his entire satisfaction. Subsequently I learned that Khama himself had vaccinated many people, and instructed others to do likewise, so that the whole tribe in a short space of time was inoculated against the ever feared smallpox.

We were much pestered by the natives of Shoshong, who came to beg for little odds and ends with annoying persistency. A pocket-knife unthinkingly displayed, the pipe one smoked, a shirt, anything and everything, were objects for their mendicity; and their desire for white men's things amounted to so great a passion, that it was not uncommon for a man to remain till bedtime from early morning to ask once more for 'that knife—oh, that lovely knife! Mokua (white man), oh give me that knife!' The native is firmly imbued with the idea that white men solely exist for the purpose that they may beg from them; and the least sign of yielding is a mistake that will bring the whole village down, each individual with his own special request, applied with enraging perseverance, until one is obliged to drive them off by force. But this, to one's chagrin, instead of frightening them only causes them much amusement, as they laughingly scatter, only to renew the attack at the first favour-

able opportunity. The traders here profit by this demand for goods, and, being protected by the king against untimely molestation, I believe make a handsome thing out of their dealings, when the natives have a *quid pro quo* to offer in the shape of ostrich feathers, ivory, or hides, the only valuable product of the country worth transporting to other markets.

In and about the village the better class male natives all wear European clothing, showing a preference for the finer sorts, such as tweed cloth and billycock hats; they rather seemed to consider us, arrayed in moleskins, as belonging to the lower orders, and we found it advantageous to don our best suit of tweeds, already laid by on leaving Pretoria, in order to impress our visitors with a proper sense of respect for our dignity.

It was a most instructive sight to see a tall, graceful, well-clad native decorously approach our camp with a following of four or five henchmen, one of whom was sure to be carrying his chair. To our inexperienced eyes, this person, when he lifted his hat in dignified salute, appeared at least to be the bearer of some diplomatic mission from the king. After the usual handshake, he would take his seat and begin with a modest request for a little tobacco, and woe to your peace of mind if this request were too readily complied with, for immediately after out would come a list of all his wants, from a suit of clothes to a snuff-box. And if we could not supply the one, then why not the other? while the hat one wore would fit him very well if one did not feel inclined to let him have the very boots one stood in. Even a little sugar, or salt, or perhaps the pot on the fire, would be acceptable to him. Failing to get any of these, the epithet 'misers' was liberally applied to us, as with a farewell shake of the hand this pest would take his dignified departure, promising to 'call again' about that pot, or whatever else had taken his particular fancy.

Never having been in Constantinople, I cannot draw a parallel between the canine inhabitants of that glorious city and the scavengers of Shoshong. However, if they support as many hungry dogs to the square yard in Constantinople as this village

does, the conditions of human life must be insupportable. We were obliged to roll up and secrete every piece of raw hide composing our yoke gear, and also the thong whips, for to these starving beasts everything that they can chew is palatable and good, as we found to our cost the first night we camped there. They simply cleaned us out, necessitating the purchase of a complete set of new gear. Our bitterest loss, however, was a large loaf of brown bread, kindly presented to the expedition by one of the traders, this last act resulting in a declaration of war against the yellow-skinned, pariah-like night marauders, who, however, never recognised defeat.

Mr. Colliard, of the Swiss Missionary Society, and family were at Shoshong on their way to establish a missionary station in the Barotzi valley, under the protection of Le Bossi, the king, who had given his assent to the enterprise on a previous visit Colliard had paid him. From what we heard subsequently, it appears that most of the members of the mission died of fever, and the station is now abandoned.

One evening, when returning from a chat with the Colliards to our camp on the outskirts of the village, we experienced a terrible fright by seeing a large conical flame burst up about the locality of our camp, that could only have one solution, 'Our tent must be on fire'—and all the instruments, guns, etc., were packed inside of it. As we hurried towards the spot, however, we were much relieved to find that the fire emanated from a limekiln which we had not observed before, some three hundred yards to the left of our camp, and which had been set alight that evening by one of the traders, who intended to use the lime for a building calculated to keep the white ants out.

Khama, to whom we applied for permission to travel through his country and for guides to show us the way to the Zambesi at the Victoria falls, accorded us no answer for several days, and thinking, perhaps, that he required a present, I approached him on the subject. His answer was kindly, but negative: 'If I accept a present with one hand,' he said, 'the white man will expect me to give double with the other. I accept no presents

like this, and I give none. You have free permission to go through my country, but men I can hardly spare, because we expect war. To-morrow you shall hear.'

As all our horses had died here of the 'sickness,' I offered him my saddle and bridle as a souvenir at this last interview ; but he refused to take it, until I pointed out to him that the saddle was now useless to me, and I should have to throw it away, as we had no animals to ride. Then he saw that the offer was made without hopes of a counterpresent, and he accepted the gift with courtesy.

Amongst the hunters and wagon-drivers congregated here¹ we found a coloured man named Franz, who, for the consideration of £4 a month and the promise of good treatment, undertook to pilot our expedition to Panda Matenga, a trading and hunting station near the Victoria falls. We afterwards persuaded him to accompany us on the whole journey through the interior, and I must pay him the compliment of saying that we always found him willing and trustworthy, although faint-hearted under trying conditions, and a little spoilt by the generosity and self-denial of his former master, Mr. Selous.

¹ Generally half-breeds, who are known by the distinctive title of 'coloured people,' in differentiation from the natives up-country.

CHAPTER II

Franz's Matabele tale of wrongs—Leave Shoshong—Granite formation—The Makarikari lake—Sport at the lake—Baobab trees—Formation at Nata river—Game on the road—Klamachanyaana pools—Elephants empty Jurua pan.

FRANZ SELOUS, as he was generally called, possessed a huge fund of hunting anecdotes, which he used to tell in a declamatory style, grandiose in magnificence; and many a night, without invitation, he would commence a recital of his adventures, at first apparently speaking lowly to the fire; then, as he warmed to his subject, and found we were listening, he would rise and cast off his clothes one after another, until, standing with one garment only by the warm glow of the fire, his yellow skin glistening in the light, all his shapely limbs aquiver with excitement, he would relate some stirring hunting experience, or recount his maltreatment by the Matabele king, of whom he stood in great awe, till all his listeners were deeply interested by his marvellous descriptive powers and his command of the African Dutch language, which for graphic description of veldt scenery and deeds surpasses any tongue on earth. Thus he told us of his exile from Matabeleland—

‘ You must know the Matabele king, Lobengula, is a savage king—a man at whose every word his people tremble; but he was very kind to all white men, and especially to my master, Selous, whom he loved, because he never lied to him as some other hunters did. He always said to Selous, “Go you and shoot where I will not allow the others to hunt, but you must not look in the ground for gold. For if gold is found in my country, the white people will come and drive me out.”

‘ Now it happened there were many sea-cows—hippopotami—

in one of the king's preserves, and he said to all hunters, Selous included, "You must not shoot sea-cows there, for I want them for myself. When you hunters come across game, you are not satisfied with a little, but you kill it all." So we all went out hunting, some going one way and some another. We had been out about three weeks, and had just reached the elephants, when a king's messenger came to us and said, "The king wants you." So we inspanned and trekked to Gu Bulawayo—the place where they kill—the king's kraal. Mighty! when we got there but the king was angry, and would see no one of us until the hunters were all arrived. Then we were asked before him, and he sat in his cattle kraal with his ring shining on his head, looking very fierce. In a deep voice the king asked, "Why do you white men shoot sea-cows?" And the white men all said, "We have shot no sea-cows, king." Then the king called a coloured hunter belonging to a white man there, and asked, "Did you shoot sea-cows?" And the hunter, seeing a lie was no good, said, "King, I did shoot sea-cows." Then the white man, the master of the hunter, said, "King, I know nothing of this." But Selous said to him, "Tell the king the man shot the sea-cows at your orders, and all will be well—a lie now will harm us, and can do no good." But the white man was afraid, and said, "I know nothing about this." Then the king looked at the white man sideways with his red eyes awful to see, and said quickly to the hunter, like a large dog barking, "Whose gun did you shoot the sea-cows with?" "My master's," was the answer. "And whose bullets did you use?" "My master's," again answered the hunter. "And whose powder and caps?" asked the king. "My master's," was the reply. Then the king's anger was terrible, and he shouted, "Who killed the sea-cows? Who killed the sea-cows? The white man killed the sea-cows." And his eyes opened and closed with rage, and we were all very frightened, for the king had only to say the word "Lahla Batagati"—"Throw away the devils"—and we should all have been killed. Ha, men, you should have seen him then!—he seemed to grow big with rage! But Selous spoke and said,

"King, make the white man pay a penalty for his misdeeds." And then the king changed his thoughts and shouted, "You shall all pay me for this white man's lie; and as for him, I will take all his things." Then the king told us to go, and we all went away fearing, yet glad that no one was killed. And we all had to pay a gun each to the king. And the king seized all the white man's goods whose boy had shot the sea-cows, and Selous gave the white man a horse and told him to ride to Mongwato without stopping. By-and-by, when the king's anger was over, a good missionary, who was at the king's kraal, and Selous got most of the white man's things back, and sent them to him at Mongwato. But I had to give my only rifle to Lobengula, and baas, I am never going to Matabeleland again.'

True to his word, King Khama let us hear from him by sending two guides to accompany us as far as the Victoria falls, with a message that we should have to pay them a blanket apiece for the four hundred mile journey. They were two serviceable fellows, called respectively Janiari and Ramkujan, who wore no clothing but skin aprons and blankets. So with this new staff of three, we faced the long, dismal journey through the sandy, bush-grown wastes, alternating with stretches of lower-lying turf flats, sparsely covered with mimosa and other thorn-clad trees. Formerly mighty troops of game inhabited these wilds; but the demand for ivory, and the unmitigated greed of many hunters, have effectually cleared this country of anything that had a tusk, plume, or hide which could be sold. On our way through the granite range of hills sheltering Shoshong to the north-west, we passed some volcanic rock that forms hills of a sombre hue, with evidences of a lava overflow, and then came upon a broad granite formation, with the characteristic granite koppjes that make the scenery most beautiful. From here the view of an endless, tree-grown rolling flat struck our gaze with an almost weird monotony never experienced before. Putting all sentiment aside, our nearest concern was to reach water for the night's camp. The tales we had heard of thirst endured in this inhospitable country were somewhat mitigated by the know-

ledge that the previous rainy season had been an unusually heavy one. We therefore decided to take the straight route through the desert, where we anticipated finding the periodically occurring pans well filled with water; nor were we disappointed in this—a stroke of luck that saved us quite eight days of extra travelling by the more circuitous Tati route, with the advantage that we would be further off from Matabeleland, whose hunting parties are famed for the unwarranted indignities they often impose on stray white travellers who traverse the country without first paying their respects to Lobengula: a thing we



GRANITE KOPPE

were anxious to avoid, as lying quite outside our route and intentions.

With one or two exceptions, we found the pans were filled with water. The furthest distance we travelled from one water to another was thirty-eight miles, which, when one is accustomed to it, is no extraordinary feat. The cattle suffered most, for we provided ourselves for possible contingencies by filling our two water casks and all the flasks at our disposal, holding at least enough water for two days' economical consumption, while the poor brutes had to make the best of it from pan to pan. We, however, always took good care that they should graze while the grass was wet with dew, to give them at least this opportunity of gathering what moisture they could.

Fourteen days of good trekking brought us to the Makarikari lake, a large, shallow salt pan, into which the remnants of the Okavango river empty themselves, without finding an outlet, after the river has nearly exhausted itself in supplying Lake Ngami and the enormous swamps lying in its course with water, although I believe that at some previous time there was a communication from the Makarikari to the Limpopo river down the Shasha river-bed. As will be seen later, the Okavango river largely exhausts its supplies in the great marshes lying west of and around Lake Ngabe (Ngami), and finally, after passing through the Zouga or Botletle swamps, has just enough water left to maintain the level of the Makarikari lake, from whose comparatively vast surface evaporation into the exceedingly dry atmosphere is sufficient to dispose of any surplus. The theory that the Makarikari once communicated with the Limpopo river is supported by the sudden breaking away south-eastwards of the country, and the formation of volcanic dikes at the south-east extreme of the lake, damming the outlet and interrupting the continuity of an outflow eastwards. At the time the Okavango flowed into the Limpopo, this river must have been an imposing stream, and one of the longest in South Africa. The damming of the outlet, however, has resulted in the formation of this shallow lake, some six thousand square miles in extent. The water in the lake is intensely brackish or salt, and natives inform us that after a heavy inundation of the lake, the water, on drying up, leaves cakes of salt deposited in suitable localities, where pools of water have been cut off by the receding flood and left to dry out, in support of which assertion on our return journey they brought us a cake of this salt, good in quality, and weighing several pounds.

The eastern shore of the lake is intersected in its grass and bush-grown plain by innumerable winding, sand-bedded, dry creeks, which form an intricate labyrinth for miles inland, doubtless filled by water at times of flood. Here many kinds of game congregate in numbers; elands, blue wildebeest, quagga, and springboks in large herds were the principal sorts we met

with. An unique character of the game here is the herding of different kinds of antelope together, feeding as if they belonged to one troop.

Early in the morning, marching alone through the bush ahead of the cart, suddenly I came upon the open borders of the lake, and was delighted to see a troop of springbok curiously eyeing me at a distance of four hundred yards. The grass here was too short to offer any opportunity of stalking; so, tying my red silk handkerchief to the ramrod, which I drew from the gun for this purpose, I struck it into the ground flag-wise, and retreated some fifty yards, where I lay down to await events. Actuated by curiosity, the buck advanced and came to within two hundred yards, where they frisked about in apparent trepidation at the unusual object before them. A large ram, bolder than the rest, walked with his nose in the air some fifty yards nearer; but as the wind was in the right quarter, he could get no scent of me. He stood for some time, then, turning round to rejoin his mates, gave me the chance at his shoulder I had been waiting for. To my great joy, as we were short of meat, the shot was successful. The rest of the herd galloped off into the plain with their peculiar bucking leaps, erecting the white mane hair, usually prone on their backs, now glistening like silver in the early morning sunlight.

Shortly after the cart came up, and we camped a little further on at a fountain of fresh water, rising like a 'glimpse of fairyland' under some palm-trees. After breakfast I went to get another shot at the troop, still in sight in the distance, and by a lucky stalk on hands and knees, got within two hundred yards unobserved. Waiting till two buck were abreast of each other, I fired, dropping both in their tracks, to my no small satisfaction, as there were six of us to feed. Hammar, who was watching proceedings through a telescope, was very much surprised when he saw both the Kaffir and myself each carrying something back, one behind the other, and concluded that we were jointly carrying home some elongated beast like a serpent, for it never occurred to him that there was more than

one animal dead, as he had heard only a single shot. It was only on our nearer approach that he recognised at last that our burdens were two separate springbok.

Later in the day we trekked to where the Nata river enters the lake, through fearful mud, that caused the cart to sink up to the bed-plank. But our well-trained oxen, pulling together, under the experienced direction of the inimitable Franz, never wavered for a moment, and drew the concern clean through the mud, leaving a broad, glistening track in its wake, where the axle had levelled the oozy mass into a greasy, glistening surface.

At the Nata river—a dry, sandy bed containing pits of water—we camped for a couple of days to rest the oxen, and meanwhile laid ourselves out to prepare a stock of springbok ‘biltong’ for use on the further journey, as game was reported by Franz to be scarce on ahead. Finding that the game frequented the sandy labyrinth-like creeks before mentioned, to sun themselves during the heat of the day, I stalked cautiously about from promontory to promontory to gain a view of the reaches open before me, and succeeded in bagging nine more springbok, who, bewildered at the shots, would often charge past in my direction, giving me a running broadside shot at short ranges, from the long grass on the banks where I lay—a piece of unusual luck. One poor brute, whose left foreleg I had broken, gave me no end of trouble. The troop to which it belonged was already very wary from the repeated shots, generally making off at long range as I approached, and the poor wounded animal was visible, attempting to buck-jump like the others; each time, however, as it landed from the jump, the one sound leg was insufficient to support its weight, and it fell clean over on its back, turning a half somersault. After a long stalk on hands and knees, I got within three hundred yards at last, and, taking a long steady sight in sitting posture, heard the bullet klop, and on running up found the poor animal put beyond the miseries of this world. Later, while I was lying in wait for a troop of buck advancing down another creek, suspiciously sniffing the air, I saw the grass move nearly opposite to me about sixty

yards off, and a fine panther, who apparently had been disturbed in his hunt by the scent of humanity I disseminated, came to the edge of the grass, and squatted on his haunches, peering inquisitively about, with a restless occasional glance in the direction of the springbok, and an uncomfortable general look around. He had not seen me lying in the long grass on the bank, so, cautiously turning round bit by bit each time he was looking in another direction, I brought the bead to bear on his neck and pulled. When the smoke cleared there was no sign of him, for the view was shut out by the long grass where he had been sitting; so, casting a glance at the departing springbok, who scampered off at the shot, I walked cautiously across the intervening space, prepared for a probable charge or spring from the beast—which might have been only wounded—and peered about. There was no sign of life; not a blade moved. Picking up a handful of sand, the only missile handy, I flung it into the grass; and then as all remained still, I climbed the bank some yards lower down, and came gently along through the long grass, watching with every sense awake for anything to stir, till I reached the spot. There lay the finest panther it has ever been my lot to see, stone dead, with his neck broken by the bullet, a gentle jerk at the end of his tail showing that he was not shamming death as these brutes, when hard hit, have been known to do. Needless to say, I returned to camp well satisfied with the day's sport.

The manufacture of biltong from the tender springbok meat occupied only a short time in that exceptionally dry atmosphere. The meat was simply cut into strips and hung over a reim—a raw hide strap—to dry, care being taken that the suspended parts were not allowed to touch each other. In the space of thirty-six hours the meat was sufficiently case-hardened to stand travelling, only requiring to be hung out at each camping-place during the two subsequent days, to give it the necessary dryness to preserve it for a long period.

Many hunters, when making biltong, soak the strips of meat in brine composed of salt and saltpetre for some hours

before subjecting it to the drying process, and this is certainly advisable when it is intended to keep the meat for long, especially if it is cut into more substantial strips several inches thick. But for ordinary, everyday use, we found simple drying of one-inch thick pieces quite answer the purpose, and a distinct saving in salt. If one lets the natives have the run of this scarce commodity in the interior, for preserving purposes, there is no telling where their extravagance or appetites will end; they simply revel in salt!

Here, at the Makarikari, we saw the first really large baobab tree, thirty-two feet in diameter—a huge, conical structure, whose branches fade into insignificance compared to the enormous trunk, with its shiny, grey surface and soft, pappy wood. The gourd-like oval shells of the fruit this tree bears are much in request by the natives for carrying water, while the glutinous, fruity matter adhering to the oval seeds inside the fruit has a pleasant, strong acid taste, and is highly appreciated as an addition to drinking-water on the hot, long marches in this dry atmosphere. We all supplied ourselves with several of these shells, and by boring a hole in one end, and fitting it with a cork, made a very decent bottle, which, filled up with water, provided a very pleasant beverage, that also acted as a slight aperient.

At Nata the formation of rocks is a loose, green grey sandstone, alternating with lime layers, probably of the Cretaceous era, although we had no opportunity of verifying this surmise.

Continuing our journey through the ever monotonous sandbelts and turf laagtos as before, we found water more frequently, some of the pans supporting innumerable wild-fowl, most delicious in flavour when cooked on the embers. Hammar and I usually allowed the cart to get a start of us in the early morning, Franz trekking off at three o'clock, while we remained at the fireside until daylight, to make walking more pleasant. With the first streak of dawn we would be up and after them, usually arriving where they had outspanned, to find all in a bustle with preparations for breakfast, and the oxen greedily feeding on the still dewy grass. As soon as we had satisfied

our appetites, each with his water-bottle well filled, we would be off again, this time ahead of the cart, never stopping until the



BAOBAB TREE

next water was reached, sometimes walking so far that the cart only caught us up on the following day, while we were com-

pelled to sleep out just as we stood, after making a hearty supper on guinea-fowl or such game birds as we managed to shoot, which usually congregate in the neighbourhood of the pans where we camped.

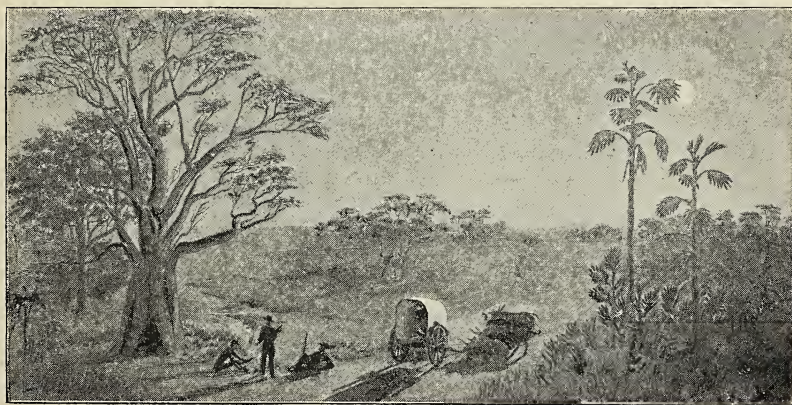
There was a faint wagon track to guide us, made by the traffic to Panda Matenga of occasional hunters and traders to this furthest settlement of white people. Although much overgrown with scrub and tree branches meeting overhead, much to the detriment of the tent covering our cart, which received many a tear and scratch in thicker bush, we never made a mistake in the route, or missed any of the waters to which this road was supposed to lead us.

It was a glorious life, this sleeping out by a large fire, and walking from point to point in the best of health and training. Neither of us ever attempted to ride in the cart, and before Panda Matenga was reached, a thirty mile walk was faced with as little anxiety, or, even less, than the breakfast question—for of the latter we were not always quite sure, unless the guns had been lucky. The cart could crawl but slowly through the incessant soft sand-belts, and often Hammar, who expressed some anxiety about the welfare of his instruments, would stay behind, leaving me to peg ahead alone, thus giving me greater opportunity for shooting, although game was very scarce along the route after leaving Makarikari.

Near Horns Vley pan, while walking a few miles ahead of the cart, to be well ahead of the sound of the cracking of the whip, which scares the game for miles ahead, I came to a turf flat, and there, in the centre of the open, were four wildebeest and seven hartebeest grazing together. Four hundred yards was the nearest I could get to them; so, sighting my rifle for that distance, I let drive at the largest wildebeest, and heard the bullet klop, but he did not fall to the shot. The startled troop made off in the direction of a small knoll in the plain to the right, when I got another shot in, about one hundred yards further off, and soon saw a wildebeest lag behind the retreating troop, and then drop. Hurrying up, I found him dead, and then

running up the knoll, fired over the heads of the flying herd to turn them. They stopped, startled at the dust raised by the bullet in front of them, and wheeling, came straight back to within five hundred yards, when my next shot dropped a hartebeest in his tracks. Off they went again in wild terror, the wildebeest with tails in the air, the picture of wild fright, in ludicrous contrast to their fierce appearance. Firing, I turned them hither and thither, but failed to drop another before they disappeared in the dark line of bush fringing the flat. I felt certain that at least one more buck was hard hit; but as there was now more meat than we could conveniently pack away, I said no more about it when the cart came up, and quickly had the dead ones cut up, and then trekked on to water.

Approaching the Klamachanyaana succession of pans, we saw the first tall black-stemmed 'kolahni' palm-trees, soon to be a daily feature in our wanderings. With our rifles we



CAMP NEAR KLAMACHANYAANA

shot down some of the date-like fruit, growing in bunches under the leaves, about sixty feet above our heads. The fruit proved to be about the size of a small orange, nut-brown in colour, and of a hard, fibrous substance, which, to our disappointment, was not edible.

Here, also, we passed through the first Mopani forest, com-

posed of leafy trees standing several yards apart from each other, clad to the ground with bright green foliage. There was no grass growing on the clayey soil between these trees, which gave the neighbourhood an appearance of a tree-grown beach.

The scenery of the Klamachanyaana is very picturesque. Tall foliage trees fringe the small lakes and cast cool shadows on the luxuriant short grass underneath, on which our cattle grazed, while bright blue and white lilies, supported by their broad, round leaves, formed a suitable edging to the water, in whose limpid brown depths multitudes of fish sported, always in danger from the attacks of the numerous wild-fowl flocking on the surface. Seldom have I seen so inviting a spot to rest in; and we took advantage of it to the full, bathing, sleeping, and feeding in succession—amusements we should have been only too glad to prolong had the circumstances allowed us such indulgence.

These pools must be supported by some underground current of water; for we learned that they are always full, and to be depended upon for water when the rest of the desert is completely dried up during the successive droughts common in this country.

We made a desperately long, thirsty trek from the Klamachanyaana to the Jurua pan, which we found to our dismay had been emptied out by a drougthy, wandering troop of elephants the previous evening. Thirsty as we were, there was no help for it but to make a forced trek on to the next water, while our poor cattle suffered severely from thirst. Without other event we reached Panda Matenga on the 20th of May, having taken two months and twenty days to complete the journey from Natal, a rate of travel exciting astonishment amongst the people we met at Panda Matenga, for the trip usually takes at least four months with ordinary wagons.

CHAPTER III

George Westbeeche at Panda Matenga—How fathers of Jesuit mission instruct natives—Bad weather on road to Victoria falls—Nearly impale myself on assegai—Victoria falls—Trade with natives for food and tobacco—Compare Victoria falls with Niagara falls.

HAMMAR and I walked up to the conical huts, elevated above the surrounding bush by the stony knoll on which they are built, and asked a native, who was on guard, which amongst the number was Jorros Motuna's—George the Big—George Westbeeche's hut. He pointed out a square wattle and daub building, to which we straightway betook ourselves, and knocked at the door. As it was opened from the inside by a native, we saw a mosquito-net pitched in one corner, under whose weather-beaten folds reclined a figure that started up on seeing strangers, and said, 'I am George Westbeeche.' We introduced ourselves, and poor Westbeeche, who was shaking with ague, put himself out to prepare a meal for us in spite of our repeated requests that he would not trouble about us, for our cart would be up directly. He was hospitality itself, and so delighted to see fresh faces that, as our acquaintance ripened, he appeared to get much better, and soon was reeling off a history of his experiences since the last visitors left, in the excited manner usual to people who live much by themselves. A few paces away was the Jesuit mission station, under the leadership of the Fathers Kroot and Bohm—two kindly gentlemen, to whom we also became much indebted for friendly little acts, most highly valued in the wilderness. With the usual fatality caused by isolation, Westbeeche and the fathers were at loggerheads over some trifle, and consequently had not spoken to each other for months—the original dispute, we understood, being over a strip of agricultural ground, certainly

not an acre in extent, while the country extended free to all comers for hundreds of miles in all directions. We wisely refrained from trying to reconcile these erring people, knowing that any intimacy would only give rise to fresh occasions for quarrel, the ill-temper being sure to burst out again like a festering sore, with possibilities, in the ungoverned wilds, of which we did not care to take the responsibility. We simply made friends with both parties, and avoided as much as possible listening to any explanations from either side. Poor souls! they are all dead now, victims to the climate, and have at last one thing in common—a grave. The intermittent fever that killed them rose from the very soil they quarrelled about.

As soon as our cart had arrived, and we had pitched camp and made ourselves comfortable by an interchange of ideas on our prospects in the future, we were surprised, late in the evening, by a visit from Westbeech, who came into the tent with an expectant, mysterious expression on his kind face that completely mystified us. After several futile attempts at conversation, the feeling that prompted the visit was blurted out by Westbeech in the words, ‘Great Scot! haven’t you any liquor?’ Nothing had been further from our thoughts, for both of us, abstemious men, had not even opened the case containing the stuff on the journey up, whisky being regarded as strictly identified with medical comforts. But now we soon produced a bottle and proffered it to Westbeech, who helped himself to a liberal ‘nip’ and passed it on to us. As we took none, a humorous expression spread like sunshine over good old George’s weather-beaten face, and he said, ‘Well, then, this bottle is no good to you, so I will take it home with me,’ and, suiting the action to the word, he went off rather sheepishly, accompanied by our shouts of laughter at his peculiar logic.

In justice to Westbeech, I must relate the fact that in the interior, amongst ‘good fellows and true,’ liquor and tobacco are always regarded as common property; besides, Westbeech, prompted by the instincts of a gentleman, anticipated our wants and helped us in every way in his power, as only a

man could help who had his long experiences of people's wants in the heart of Africa.

Westbeeche told us how twelve years ago he had arrived for the first time with three wagon loads of goods at the Chobe junction to trade with the natives. Sepopo, the king, came to him with many followers, and told him to take all his personal effects from the wagons and stack them on one side. As soon as this was done, Sepopo, without further question, ordered his men to take all the goods off the wagons and march them off to a town he was then occupying on the other side of the river, and then invited Westbeeche to visit him there. Not knowing what course to pursue, Westbeeche went over to Sepopo, who treated him right royally, giving him the free run of the country, and allowing him to shoot as many elephants as he liked. However, Westbeeche, tiring of this, begged for leave to go home; but Sepopo detained him, as he said, to make friends. At last, after staying a year and a half, Westbeeche insisted on leaving, when Sepopo, with many expressions of kindness and regret, allowed him to go. But while Westbeeche was inspanning his wagons to depart, Sepopo came over to him with hundreds of bearers carrying ivory, and ordered them to pack it all on the wagons as a gift for Westbeeche to remember him by; then, bidding him good-bye, with tears in his eyes, he turned and walked away. Westbeeche realised £12,000 out of the ivory on his return to civilisation, a fact that induced him to return and settle in the Barotzi country, where he founded the Panda Matenga trading station.

Panda Matenga, so named after a native chief called Panda, who first traded there, and 'tenga' to buy, is a little village composed of some thirty huts, occupied in the first instance by Westbeeche and his hunters, some twenty in number, who scour the country for the fast receding elephants. Besides these, there are the Jesuit missionaries, who came to settle here some four years before our visit, and their seventeen converts, mostly children, whom they are educating to be carpenters, blacksmiths, and agriculturists—a very effective and sensible manner of raising

the native above the level of his fellows; for his knowledge makes him discontented with the lot of an ordinary savage, and he seeks by means of the art he has learned to support himself on a more civilised scale. The religion of these priests seemed to be practical, and they laid little stress on the dogmatic side of it—a matter that should be left to grow on the savage by degrees as he advances in learning. It was very amusing to observe the ways of the little fellows the missionaries had in hand, as they filed past the assembled fathers in the early morning to make their salutation before proceeding to their allotted tasks. Coming up in succession, each one fronted his tutors, and, scraping his right foot on the ground, with a polite bow made use of the expression, ‘Good morroh, fadirr,’ and scurried off with a grin, exposing a row of white teeth in his little jolly black face that showed the kind feeling existing between master and pupil. The good fathers explained to us that these children were waifs and strays whom they had picked up. They had no other pupils, for the king in the Barotzi valley and the smaller chiefs around placed every obstacle in the way of their obtaining legitimate children to educate.

The history of this last attempt of the Jesuits to establish themselves on the Zambesi teems with disasters. On the first visit of their former leader to the Barotzi king, some three years ago, the boat in which he returned down the river capsized near the Gona falls, and three of the mission, including the Father Superior, were swept under, never to be seen again. The rest of them succumbed to the malarial influences of the climate in dreary succession, and I am informed that the mission is now extinct. Relics of former attempts made by the Jesuits to establish themselves during the early stages of South African development on the Zambesi are not wanting, Zumbo having been one of their centres.

As we were very anxious to reach the Victoria falls, fifty-eight miles distant, on the 24th, George Westbeeck immediately supplied us with guides and carriers to take a few necessities

with us, while he cheerfully took charge of and cared for our oxen, etc., during our absence.

We had experienced such settled weather after leaving Mongwato that we never required to pitch a tent the whole way up, and, trusting that the usual dry season had now set in, we left our tent behind us, and started, late on the 22nd, through the hilly and stony country on our way to the falls, in high anticipation of the treat before us. What a delightful change it was, after the eternal tramp through the sand-belts, to feel once more firm soil beneath one's feet. The prevailing rocks of this country are porphyr basalt and greenwacke, with quartzite to the south. We camped the first night on the banks of the Matetse rivulet, whose gentle gurgling lulled us to sleep with quite new sensations, and next day put some twenty-five miles more behind us, in hopes to reach the Victoria falls on the 24th, the birthday of the Queen, whose Christian name the loyal Livingstone thought most fit to bestow on this grand work of Nature. In the enthusiasm of youth, and not without personal longings, we had brought some champagne with us to celebrate the Queen's birthday on this unusual spot; but alas for our aspirations! towards midnight black clouds rolled up in awful grandeur, and with most terrible flashes of lightning, accompanied by terrific crashes of thunder, a storm, seldom equalled for violence even in tropical climates, broke over our defenceless heads. Hastily rolling our few eatables in a macintosh, and placing them on some cut branches to keep them off the soaking ground, soon running in rivulets, I stood over the fire covered by a blanket to keep the dying embers alive, while the rest of the party hastily built a screen of boughs, into which they huddled, perhaps in a worse plight than I, for the terrific rain leaked unhindered in large drops through this shallow attempt at protection. However, I kept the fire alight through the night; nor was my position in any way made more comfortable by the roaring of a couple of lions, who struck up their tune, towards three o'clock in the morning, about half a mile off.

Towards daylight the storm abated somewhat, and we proceeded on our way, slipping and floundering along, in a most exhausting manner, through the long grass that met over the footpath. Towards midday on the 24th the rain came down again in such torrents that we decided to build a grass hut for protection; but, through the haste we made, this affair turned out a complete failure, and we spent the rest of the day and the night in a plight that was worse than in the open, exposed to the direct downpour; for the accumulated large drops that fell from the roof of the hut in showers had a much more disturbing effect than the direct unhindered rain, and I preferred an outside berth. The weather cleared towards morning, and bright sunshine seemed to offer an apology for past discomforts, so we gaily marched along through the bush, with our clothes steaming into dryness in the morning air.

The little rivulets we had to cross were now swollen to the proportion of torrents, and in one of these I nearly came to grief by falling on the assegai I was stupidly carrying, blade upwards, as a walking-stick. This rivulet, from its raging appearance, frightened the boys from crossing; so, to give them confidence, I jumped in, dressed as I was, and forded the drift breast high. In the middle I lost my footing by slipping on a stone, and, the current forcing me downward, I sought to support myself by jamming the heel of the spear on the bottom, and in an instant was forced against the point by the rushing water, which with the impetus given by the fall threatened to impale me. But with a rapid wrench in the moment I forced the spear aside, just grazing the skin through the shirt—the only garment covering the spot. It is needless to say that I abandoned assegais as walking-sticks after this experience.

Some twenty miles from the falls, after climbing a red sand-hill, a magnificent view burst on our gaze as we emerged from the forest. Below us the wooded country lay stretched out like a picture, while slightly to the right a faint cloud, hovering and swaying in the sunshine as if fettered to the ground by some invisible force, indicated the locality of the falls. Franz and

several others asserted that they could already hear the roar of the falling waters—a not impossible thing with the breeze in the right quarter; but, personally, we could not corroborate the statement. We marched without a break through to the usual camping ground about a mile and a half above the falls on the banks of the Zambesi in great excitement, the roar of the waters increasing as we neared the spot, until at this distance it was necessary to raise our voices slightly to make conversation comfortably audible. We felt no fatigue from our long march and uncomfortable nights—the senses were drowned in the glorious view before us.

Our first view of the falls from the camp was while standing by the huge baobab trees that line the banks, their size dwarfed into insignificance by the mighty volume of rushing water, in whose broad blue expanse lovely palm-grown islands divide the current that unites in whirlpools below. All nature seems inclined with the stream, and our very senses are directed towards the spot where the water, giving a preparatory bound, as if to anticipate its doom, precipitates itself into the deep chasm with a terrific, uninterrupted roar that defies comparison. From the chill depth a wind rises, conveying high into the air mighty volumes of vapour, which, fringed with rainbow colours in the sun, hover above in columns like weird spirits guarding this greatest of Nature's works. One single palm tree,



SPECIMEN OF BAOBAB TREE, VICTORIA FALLS

rooted to a small island on the falls' brink, forced into action by the air current from below, tosses its fan-shaped leaves as if in wild despair at the inevitable fate that soon must engulf it. Aloft, the soaring fish-eagle screams, with shrill, plaintive in-



SPECIMEN OF BAOBAB TREE, VICTORIA FALLS

tonation, a protest at the invasion of his solitude, while bright birds, like rays of golden light, darting from island to island, recall the enthralled senses back to cheerful life from the dark, mysterious, hissing, angry abyss on the right.

Our first care was to build a substantial hut as protection against possible bad weather—an unnecessary precaution; for, now we were prepared, the weather was all that could be desired. We noticed a peculiar red

gummy juice oozing from the saplings we cut to build the hut with. Later information we gathered concerning this juice is that it has a commercial value as a gum.

Hammar and I, in uncontrollable desire, rushed off immediately the hut was finished to inspect the falls, but were cruelly disappointed in getting a view; for the blinding spray and rising clouds completely enveloped the face of the falls, only affording an occasional glimpse of what we so eagerly wished to see, as the rising clouds for a moment are swept aside by a stronger breeze than usual. Gazing downwards, the same hindrance obscured the view; a vast dim grey, almost violet,

cloud filled the depths, and as it was late we adjourned to camp. That night we sat long on the river banks in the moonlight, discussing the falls, till warned by the approach of a sea-cow, from whose wet hide the light cast a silver-white reflection, that we had better retire to our fireside. Our excitement was too great to allow much sleep, and with the first rays of dawn we were off again, ignoring the attractions of breakfast, to renew the search for points affording better views of the falls. We got parted during the search in the thick bush lining the opposite bank of the falls, and Hammar, while crawling on all fours



ZAMBEZI ABOVE VICTORIA FALLS

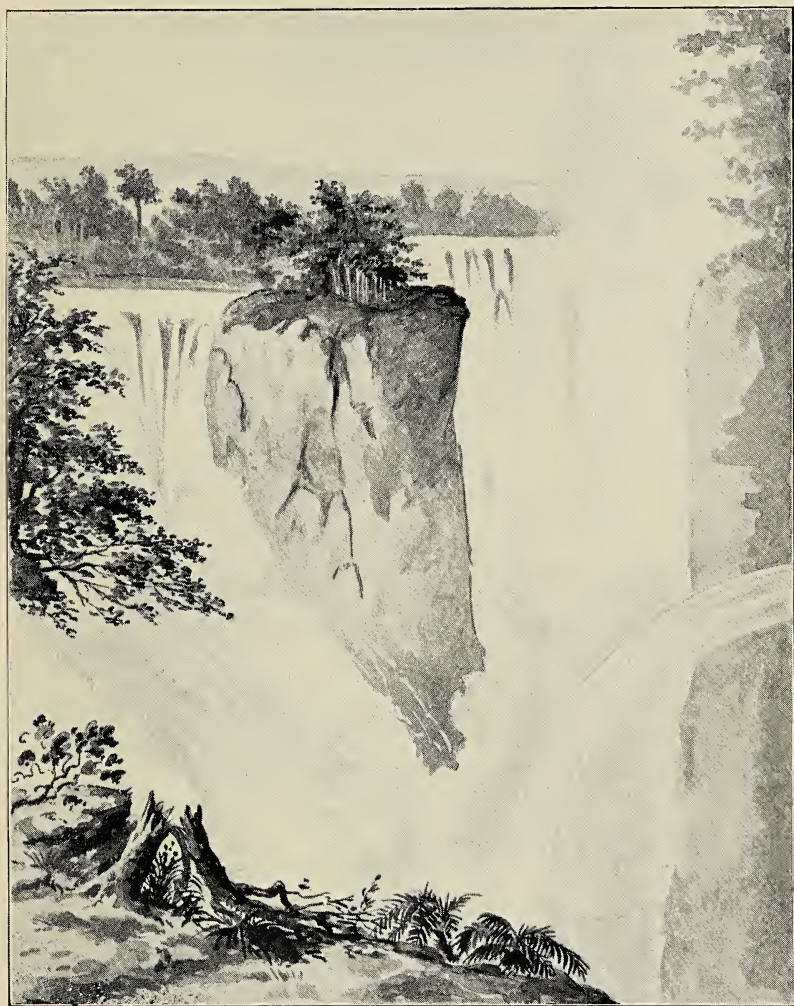
along a sea-cow path from one place to another, ran bang against a hippo face to face, to his no small trepidation. Luckily the fright was shared by the pachyderm, which made off with many grunts into the thicket.

The first point that really permitted a view down to the water's surface, at the bottom of the falls, was at the outlet—a spot known as the Devil's Kettle; and here, standing opposite the falls on the brink of the deep chasm into which the water precipitates itself, through the mist and haze we could recognise the water below in great commotion, seething and churning in a manner quite justifying its name. Beyond this the river rushes at great speed in its course along the chasm—a veritable crack in the earth.

The river, above the falls fully a mile and a quarter wide and about forty feet deep at this season of the year, falls into this crack or chasm, which is about six hundred feet wide, running transversely to the river bed, in a sheer drop of over four hundred and fifty feet. The roar of the falling water here is so great that it makes conversation in the neighbourhood quite impossible even by shouting. Owing to the confined space into which the water falls, strong air currents are forced upward, that carry fine spray in the form of clouds aloft, a never ending supply from below sustaining the volume at the base of these towering masses, which spread like a huge canopy at the top, or in rainy weather unite their columns with the clouds in the heavens. These clouds, in which the sun shining forms concentric rainbows of marvellous beauty, condense in mid air, and inundate the ground beneath with phenomenal showers of rain falling at intervals of every few minutes, which saturate the ground, and cause unusual fertility; the thick grown vegetation on the brink of the chasm, is defined with the precision of a well-clipped garden hedge. The rocks, constantly subjected to the ever falling moisture, are covered with a slippery moss, very dangerous to those approaching too near the edge of the chasm opposite the falls. The long matted grass growing in some open patches near the falls, left to decay for many seasons, has formed a springy, spongy foundation, most tedious and difficult to force a passage through.

At a corner on the south right bank on top of the falls, where the edge of the rock has been worn away, the water rushes with marvellous velocity in unbroken surface down the incline for a distance of fifty yards, the green, scintillating, rushing mass exercising almost a mesmeric inviting influence on the gazer, until, for safety's sake, it is perhaps best to depart from the spot to avoid the attraction. Below, by the north left bank of the falls, is the exit of all this mass of water through a narrow channel six hundred feet wide, with perpendicular walls of columnar basalt nearly five hundred feet high from the water. From a calculation based upon the volume, depth, and speed of

the water above the falls, I gathered the startling result that there was a mass of water four hundred feet deep rushing through



VICTORIA FALLS, SOUTH BANK

this chasm at twelve knots an hour, thus giving a total depth from top to bottom of about one thousand feet in the chasm; and this estimate is below the mark, if anything.

About a mile and a half below the fall, along the river's course, the chasm conducting the water turns back at an acute angle, and here, at this spot, where I climbed down to the water's edge, the knowledge of the true might of pure water can be experienced. Wave on wave, the current comes rushing down the strait, pushing and forcing itself along. As if too confined, the water seeks to rush over the wave preceding it; then, as if amazed at the opposition to its outlet by the altered course of the chasm at the angle, it strikes the opposing rock, bending downwards from the recoil to throw up conical-shaped hillocks in the centre of its current, which, living for a moment only, break away in sweeping whirlpools, following the course of the stream. Again the frothy, seething mass strikes the rock, and with a swishing hiss the mass is violently hurled to the opposite bank, forming a whirlpool whose outer edge crawls slowly against the stream along the opposite wall, until it is violently engulfed in the general mass of hurrying, seething, bubbling, rushing, dark green current down its new course. I sat lost in watching this ever changing marvellous scene, oblivious of self and time, until my native companion warned me that the sun was getting low; and gazing at him and my own body alternately in bewilderment—for the mighty scene had robbed me of all sense of proportion—I gained the impression that our stature had shrunk to that of pigmies. So vastly had the imposing spectacle expanded the senses, that, feeling a giant myself, it was quite a shock to be brought back to reality. Subdued, we silently ascended the cliff, to realise that it was four o'clock, and that I had sat for six hours, utterly lost to all but the wonderful picture before us.

Below this point, in its extension, the chasm forms several zig-zags, each stretch of greater length than the last, narrowing as it goes along, till, at a point the natives told us of, one can throw a stone from one bank to the other, and the river is over-arched by rock forming a footpath used by the natives to cross over. Below this the river pours itself into a wide current again in open country.

During the several days we spent investigating the falls, some natives, subjects of the Chief Masotani, from across the river above the falls, brought us corn, millet, pistachio nuts, mealies, and pumpkins, besides some goats for sale, in exchange for glass beads, brass wire, and common coarse calico, the currency of the country. The canoes in which they came paddling over the river are made of some very hard wood, and are highly valued by the natives, who are most expert in paddling about in the strong Zambesi current. They do not seem to be aware of the use of outriggers. Some tobacco they sold us, made from a native weed, and pressed into nine-inch high cones Δ mixed with goat dung to give it consistency, proved excellent smoking.

Hammar was deeply engrossed in sketching and painting various aspects of the falls, an operation requiring macintoshes and umbrella to shield him from the ever recurring periodical sharp showers of rain, formed by the condensing moisture overhead. It was a very ludicrous sight to see two bare-legged individuals, clothed only in macintoshes, hastily endeavouring between the showers to commit a piece of scenery to paper, the one holding an umbrella over the other, who sketched for bare life, while casting occasional anxious glances upwards to watch the coming of the heavy showers, so as to be in time to place the partly finished sketch in dryness under his macintosh before the downpour came. Working this way, Hammar succeeded in getting the outlines of the illustration here published.

As I am one of the few individuals who have seen both the Victoria and Niagara falls, perhaps the question will occur to the reader, as it did to many Americans whom I met, which is the greater fall? Answering this question in America greatly imperilled my popularity with some patriotic sons of the 'we go one better' country, for it seemed like a national insult to hear it unhesitatingly stated that the Victoria falls have at least four times the volume of water and over three times the height of the Niagara. The Victoria falls burst on one's sensibilities immediately with appalling grandeur, while the Niagara, the Americans themselves confess, at first appear not so very mar-

vellous, but by growing on one seem to increase in magnificence the longer one stays by them.

I should, however, in justice to the comparison, acknowledge that we saw the Victoria falls at their best, at the end of a very heavy rainy season, when the water, accumulated at last in one bed from the great network of water in the interior, has reached its utmost height in the months of May and June. Rain falling in the watershed near the west coast during the wet season, ending about March, would only reach here after its long journey of many hundreds of miles about this time; and we learned from Westbeeck that in the summer, while the rain is falling, the river is usually much lower, and that then the phenomena we witnessed are on a proportionately more modest scale. Owing to this, it is possible that others, observing the falls when the water is not so high, may have a less magnificent account to give.

It will be seen from this that the Victoria falls are subject to considerable fluctuation in the volume of water according to the season, while the Niagara falls, I am informed, maintain their level, without much alteration, throughout the year, the greatest fluctuation being about three feet.

CHAPTER IV

Return to Panda Matenga—Engage Jan Veyers—Prepare for journey up the Chobe with bearers—Jan Africa's fight with a lioness.

WITH much regret we said good-bye to the Falls, and returned to Panda Matenga on June 4th, to prepare for our further voyage up the Chobe. We followed out our intention—as it was advisable to leave the cart and oxen here—to continue our journey on foot, accompanied by bearers to carry our goods. George Westbeeck, who is a chief here, established by both the Barotzi and the Matabele, sent to the native chief Swangie, one hundred and sixty miles away down the Zambesi, for ninety bearers to go with us; and while waiting for these to arrive, we occupied the time in making canvas bags to carry our more valuable articles in, and also packs for three donkeys we purchased from one Klaas Africa, the son of Jan Africa, for a consideration. One of these, 'Sarah,' had already been a trip up to Lebossi, the king at Lee a Lui—the place where the sun shines—with Mr. Arnot, a member of Mr. Colliard's Swiss mission. Arnot remained at the king's to keep the position open, while Mr. Colliard returned with his family to the coast for supplies and material to erect the mission at Lee a Lui; for the king had, in response to his request, given him permission to settle there. Later on, I was told Arnot found his way out to the west coast along a Portuguese trading route landing him at Benguela.

While making our preparations, Jan Veyers, a well-known Dutch hunter, returned to Panda Matenga from one of his usual short hunts after elephants in the neighbourhood, and him we engaged to accompany us as far as a chief called Matambanja, living some distance up on the Chobe river, whom he knew

personally, having met him once when Matambanja paid Westbeechee a trading visit some years previously. Jan Veyers was a tall, spare man of over fifty years, an intrepid hunter, with a record given him by Westbeechee, which caused us to place the highest confidence in him. His introduction to Matambanja was to serve us in obtaining bearers westward, while Jan was to escort our bearer troop back from there to Panda Matenga. Highly satisfied with our bargain, and also having persuaded Franz Selous to join us as interpreter, we felt that the fates were in our favour. Franz certainly displayed a resigned melancholy at leaving Panda Matenga, doubtless owing to an attachment he had formed for some dusky lady residing there; but we felt that, once safely beyond the wiles of his fair charmer, his cheerfulness and energy would return, redoubled by the sport and adventure, for which he expressed so decided a predilection.

Rudolf, the German boy, our cook, also displayed a keen interest in the arrangements we were making, and we were all anxious to be on the move.

The Jesuit fathers, with whom we spent many pleasant evenings, tried hard to convert us to their faith, and if kindness and persuasion had been convincing factors in matters of this sort, they surely would have conquered at the outset. Father Kroot confessed at last that he wished us to become pioneers for his mission, to which mark of esteem we could only with much politeness give a negative answer, as we had other fish to fry.

Some of George Westbeechee's hunters, a motley group of coloured, hard-looking men, who were within reach of news that white men had arrived at Panda Matenga, turned up with unmistakable signs of expectancy on their swarthy countenances, not to be mistaken after the experience of Westbeechee's first visit to our tent. Recognising the mute appeal, we humanely shelled out a few bottles to establish our reputation as men of the right sort, and were rewarded by some most stirring hunting tales, told when all reserve was cast aside, and the true nature of the men came out in graphic sentences, which I am

afraid will ill compare in English with the rough Veldt Dutch in which they related their adventures. Jan Africa, an enormous, square-built fellow of forty years, standing six feet two inches in his bare feet, possessing a Greek cast of countenance due to his origin—a cross between a Jew and Hottentot—prompted by Westbeech, while still suffering from several unhealed wounds received in the encounter, gave us his famous lion story. As he stretched his enormous maimed limbs by the fireside, and erected his tall, gaunt frame to its utmost height, a glow overspread his fine-looking oriental countenance, causing his olive skin to assume a velvety appearance, strongly enhanced by the red cloth wound round his head. With closed eyes he commenced his tale, slowly weighing his words, till at last the recollection of the battle fired his speech, and it came forth in sharp sentences, thrilling his hearers into wonderful sympathy.

‘One morning I left the skerm where we were stationed, to look for game, for we were hungry. I had three good dogs, and one bullet in my gun (a muzzle-loader) and two more in my pouch. My Bushman went with me. We had not gone far when the dogs took up a scent and went rushing off, and we followed, running, after them. I expected they were after a pig, which they would soon bring to bay, but was much startled to hear one of the dogs ahead yelp in death-agony. Hurrying on, we came upon the dead dog badly torn, and then we heard another dog give a death-yell. Then I grew angry for sake of my faithful animals, and, running on, came upon the next dog torn and dead as the other one was. Then we heard the third dog also give his last yell. When we came near the spot where the last dog yelled, we looked about, and there lay a grey-throated old lioness with both paws across my black dog’s body. She drew her ears back when she saw us and looked wicked, but I said to myself: “Jan, you must kill this lion, because she killed your dogs”—so I took steady aim and fired. The bullet hit her in front of the shoulder, and passed out behind on the other flank—a cross shot. She sprang away from the dog into a thicket

close by, and roared terribly; and then I loaded my gun, but my Bushman said to me, "Master, we must leave this lion, for she means to hurt us," and I, knowing she would die by-and-by from the shot, agreed, and we turned and went back the way we came. We had not gone far, when the Bushman caught hold of me in warning, for I was not looking, and my heart was sore for my good dogs, and said, "Master, what is that in the path in front of us?" There she was, the devil, lying in the path some sixty yards off, and I was glad, because I did not like to leave her behind, for she had killed my dogs, and I thought: "Jan, the lion challenges you because you have a weak heart, and turned away from her; but now she is there, no one shall say that Jan Africa ever turned from a challenge!" I fired and hit her through the left ear, making a bad shot, because she was lying flat like a snake on the ground, and I could not see her well. While she lay and growled loudly, I loaded my gun again with the last bullet, and, taking good aim, fired and cut her skin open down the back—and then she came! Masters, what is the good of standing to face a lion charging you, roaring with open mouth, when your gun is empty? "No good," I say, so I turned and ran towards a tree, and the Bushman ran also. The next thing I know was that I was flying through the air, and landed, half stunned, on my stomach. When I came to, the lion was standing over me with her claws in my shoulder, there and there'—and he pulled off his shirt to show the wounds. After a pause he went on: 'I lay still and thought a while, and made up my mind to wrestle with her; so I jerked myself round, and when she saw my face she tried to bite my throat, but I put my right arm into her mouth and she bit me—look where the teeth went through. Then I thought of my knife in its sheath under me, and I put my left arm in her mouth to free my right and to ease me a bit from the pain, and felt for my knife, but I could not grasp it well as my arm was too much bitten and my thumb was hanging by a sinew. Then I thought: "Put the

powder flask in her mouth"; and I put the powder flask in her mouth and she bit it full of holes—here it is—and all the time I could hardly breathe, for her claws were stuck in my chest here, look, and a lion is heavy! When at last I got my knife out, holding it between my fingers, some devil said to me: "Put it in her eye, Jan"; and I put it in her eye with all my force, but mighty! then she bit me sore and scratched me more. Look at these marks! Then I got angry and rose on one knee to wrestle with her and she threw me down, but I was a strong wrestler as a young man, and I rose again and gained my two knees, holding her by the shoulders, and ducking my head against her neck so that she could not bite me, and then she clawed me here and here—showing several terrific parallel marks under each arm. Ah God, it was not a fair fight! She had too many claws and teeth, but my heart was big, and I cared not for the wounds, and wrestled with her till I threw her on her back, and then all the devils in hell could not hold me as I jumped on her like a wild beast and buried my fingers in her throat. Fight is fight, oh people, and a man with a heart will fight until he dies!' He fairly shrieked and stamped on the ground to give emphasis to his words as his eyes rolled wildly, and his breath came sharp and quick, as in the battle he was fighting over again. 'And then she clawed me in the sides here, look, men who are not afraid of wounds! look and see what a man can carry and live! And then the lion lay still,' he continued in subdued tones; 'I knew she was dying from the first shot, and held her there, but she moved not; and looking round I saw my hat lying here and my gun lying there, and I lay still and then suddenly loosed the lion'—with a jerk of his hands—'and ran home, picking up my hat on the way. I could run, for my legs were unhurt, but the gun I could not carry, for my arms were too sore. When I got home, the Bushman was telling my wife how the lion had eaten me, and the last he saw of me was my two feet kicking in the lion's mouth. I would have beaten him for deserting me, but I was bitten and scratched

all to pieces. The death came into my thumb, so "Jorros Matuna" cut it off with his pocket-knife. But my wounds are nearly all healed, for the lioness was old and had blunt and broken teeth.'

While Jan was telling this tale, his son Claas, a youth of twenty years, was sitting by, nursing a succession of wounds he had got in a hand to paw conflict with a panther the previous week, a beast he slew on top of him with his dagger.

CHAPTER V

Start for the Chobe—Mode of payment to the bearers—Rudolf left behind with fever—His sad end—The Situtunga buck—Jan Veyers' adventure with a lion—Shooting on the Chobe—Crocodile—Hammar's adventure with hippopotami.

THIRTY bearers arrived from Swangie's about the 28th of June, and we heard from them that another batch of like number was on the way. Amongst this first lot was a man whom Westbeeche pointed out as a great villain, one who had repeatedly played tricks on the hunters whom he had accompanied on short expeditions in the neighbourhood. No sooner had this man arrived than he commenced to harangue the people about the dangers they might encounter on the journey we proposed to take, telling them we were strangers not to be trusted, and so forth, and in general made things lively for us and for the 'boys.' Of course we did not understand what he was saying at the time, but as soon as Franz had made the gist of his conversation clear to us, we called Westbeeche, and on his advice immediately discharged this obnoxious fellow, much to his chagrin, as he had hoped to gain some advantage by this artifice and at least receive a good present to stop his tongue. At the time I expressed the opinion that this was a mistake, and that we should have got on the right side of him by offering him extra wages, as he was a man of some standing amongst his people, and at the last moment could have left him behind to deprive him of the opportunity of doing further harm. He left in high dudgeon, not without a parting shot at our 'boys,' saying that we would lead them into untold misery and a dreadful death, and, not content with this, he went to meet the other bearers on the road and told them that he had a message from us to say that they were no longer

needed, as our complement was full, which caused them to return to their homes. Had it not now been for the kindness of Westbeech and the Jesuit Fathers, who lent us all their spare natives, thirty-four, we should have had to wait goodness knows how long before we got sufficient bearers to proceed with.

Soon all was in readiness, the packs complete, the canvas saddlebags fitted to the donkeys, and we were anxious to make a start. We had taken the precaution to make up all our heavy stuff into small packages, leaving the large ones somewhat lighter. Accordingly, our delight was great, when the word was given to 'select packs,' to see the burlier of the 'boys' in the rush pushing the slighter ones aside to seize the small packages, leaving the larger and lighter ones to the weaker boys. Jan Veyers stood by with a grim smile on his face at the success of our artifice, expecting the row to break out immediately that took place later as soon as the bullies found out how neatly they had been tricked. But I may say here at once that all their jabbering later was of no avail, and they had to stick to the burdens they had chosen themselves, in spite of their disgusted remonstrances.

In dealing with these unwilling savages, who had never previously been subjected to any discipline whatever, and who were simply guided by their own inclinations on all subjects, any interference with which brought threats of immediate desertion, we had to exercise great patience, and occasionally stratagem, to keep things going at all smoothly.

It was arranged between Westbeech and ourselves that the payment the boys were to receive for the trip—blankets, beads, calico, and brass wire—should be handed out to them by Westbeech on their return from Matambanja's. Each boy was to bring back a note signed by us at parting, recognising the liability, to legitimise his claim, without which note Westbeech was instructed not to pay any one. This gave us some hold over the boys, but we found later that it was one they appeared to think very little of, for in their hasty superficial minds no abstract idea outweighed the ever present, daily, unaccustomed hard work

that drove them to rebellion, in spite of the value they attached to the goods when once in their possession.

Westbeeche had established this mode of payment to natives by slips of paper, as a matter of convenience, for services, etc., or in trade, and by religiously redeeming his paper, when his wagons periodically arrived from the settlements with goods, was enabled to carry on his trade and work without being in immediate possession of articles to pay down for purchases, etc. This often enabled him to have a load of ivory, feathers, and skins in readiness to send out with the returning wagons. He informed us that he was obliged frequently to redeem 'bits of paper' signed by hunters and others who had left the country without settling their debts, in order to uphold the integrity of the paper-system.

Bidding Westbeeche and the Fathers a hearty farewell, we started for a pan called Kajuma, the first stage on our journey, where we had arranged to meet a half-breed called Jan Waal, a hunter, who had promised to guide us through the sand-belts straight to the Sonta river, where it joins the Chobe, a route on which he professed to know the locality of pans containing water at easy distances along the route. But when we reached Kajuma Jan Waal had disappeared from his huts, and the natives told us that, hearing of a troop of elephants, he had left hurriedly on their track, without of course being able to say when he would return. Neither Jan Veyers nor any of the other people accompanying us had ever been this road before, so we decided to take the beaten path to the junction of the Chobe and Zambesi rivers at Lejuma, and follow the right bank of the Chobe upwards past the Sonta river to Matambanja's.

The difficulties attendant upon starting with bearers have been so often related by travellers that I refrain from troubling the reader with even a portion of our woes on the first fifty miles. Circumstances provided us with our full share of annoyances, caused by keeping the boys together, organising the messes, and whacking along unwilling donkeys, whose chief aim seemed to be to rid themselves of their loads by rubbing against convenient stumps and trees.

On reaching our second camping-ground the bearers told me that Rudolf had subsided under a tree some distance back. He had neglected his training and caught a slight fever. Returning for him, I found him too weak to walk, and, failing any better method of transportation, 'humped' him into camp, and on the following day left him at Westbeeche's station, 'Lejuma,' which we passed, in charge of a man called Blockley, who was sending a cart back to Westbeeche's with ivory, etc., begging Westbeeche kindly to look after him and send him out with his wagons to Klerksdorp. My reasons for doing this were, that to be hampered with a sick man at the start of a long foot expedition would vastly increase our troubles, while I knew that he would be looked after by Westbeeche, and that he stood a much better chance of recovery than if he were carried on and on into unhealthy and unknown regions.

I may as well finish Rudolf's sad tale, as a typical example of the effects of African fever and hardship. He recovered at Westbeeche's and finally reached Pretoria after many adventures, where I met him accidentally in the street two years later. His joy at meeting me again, as he said, on his twenty-first birthday, was so great that it affected his brain, and next morning early, when I went to look for him, as he had failed to keep an appointment with me, the people he was staying with told me that the evening before he had come home much excited at having found his old master, and after going to his room went out into the garden, after which they had not seen him. But now it struck them that they had heard a muffled report in that direction. On vaulting over the thick rose-hedge at the end of the garden, I came upon his corpse, with a small ivory-handled revolver, a former present from me, lying by his side, a hole in his left temple and a smile on his lips. He lies in the Pretoria cemetery, with a little stone cross over his grave.

I must here remark that on the trip up from the coast I had insisted on the members of the expedition taking hard walking exercise, so that when we reached unhealthy country our trained bodies would offer more resistance to malarial infection. Hammar

and myself had religiously followed out this precaution, and I relate with much satisfaction that in consequence neither of us had a single day's illness throughout the trip, although we traversed the most appalling swamps, including the famous Linyanti and Selinda or Sunta—hotbeds of fever.

Blockley kindly lent us some boys, whom he put in charge of a native hunter, to assist us as far as Maameelis, with instructions to hunt ostriches on their way back.

On the 25th of June we first sighted the banks of the Chobe, land and river of our sporting hopes and ambitions. Jan Veyers



FIRST VIEW OF CHOBE

and myself had gone ahead through the sand-belts, here more undulating and abrupt as they break away towards the river, and soon caught a glimpse of open water limpidly reflecting the light from two channels each two hundred to three hundred yards wide, while the rest of the river-bed, one thousand yards wide in all, is a mass of reeds and swamp. The current was running at a speed nearly one and a half knots an hour, while the water is very deep. From an elevation on the bank we could see various hippo popping up their heads in the stream to breathe, a performance occasionally accompanied by sounds not unlike those brought about by striking a machine boiler with a large hammer.

Further up we found the river broaden out into vast swamps many miles wide, while the true river current winds its deep course through the palm-dotted islands, rising oasis-like out of the endless plain of reeds.

This is the home of the buffalo, puku, letzwee, and many other kinds of buck, including the mysterious 'situtunga,' who whiles away his life wallowing in the water like a seal, only visiting the river banks late in the evening and at night to cull the succulent choice grass growing in great abundance on this favoured spot. Of the situtunga, Serpa Pinto, the fantastic Portuguese explorer, writes that it is an aquatic animal specially gifted by Nature with blow-holes and breathing apparatus through the horns, the final orifice being at the tip. A charming idea, but, alas for the accuracy of Pinto's observation! not borne out by fact, since the heads we obtained only showed a stronger development of the nasal wings, enabling the beast to open and close the orifice at will like a seal, while the horns, a beautiful spiral, are effectively formed for defensive purposes like those of any other antelope, and are not weakened by any of Nature's freaks, of which this surely would be the most inexplicable and the oddest. A conspicuous anatomical anomaly, however, is found in the formation of the feet of this buck, which are abnormally long and slightly webbed at the base of the toes. This configuration of their extremities, while excellently adapted for swimming purposes, deprives them of the prerogative of speed on land enjoyed by other antelopes. In fact their gait on land is a clumsy waddle, whereas amongst the floating tangled reeds they manage to find a support by pointing the toes downwards, and getting a footing by resting on the reeds that slip into the fork of the toes as they go along, an advantage that enables them to traverse the dense masses of tangled reeds that lie floating over the deep water beneath.

To me the mystery of this buck's existence lies in the possibility of its living in water teeming with crocodiles. The amicable relations between these must be of a lasting and binding nature, for any rupture would inevitably result in the

extermination of this the most interesting representative of the antelope group. Shy and alert, this curious buck is difficult of approach. Lolling and ruminating in deep water only in the most secluded reed-bound pools, occasionally showing its beautiful white-tipped horns as it elevates its nostrils from below to breathe, it dives away, on the faintest suspicious sound, to hide under or in the masses of floating reeds, where it is impossible to detect or follow it, thus truly supporting the doubt whether one is really dealing with an antelope. Even when the river rises very high, and other game is driven forth from the seclusion of the reeds to seek firm footing on higher ground, the situtunga experiences no alteration in its necessities, for the masses of floating reeds only rise and fall with the watermark. It is only by great perseverance and unusual luck that the hunter can gratify his wish to number the graceful situtunga amongst his other trophies. The skin is somewhat thinly covered with long, coarse, greyish-brown hair.

That night, as we camped on the sandy grass-grown banks of the Chobe beneath a large tree, the air was rent by the hoarse but musical bellowing of hippopotami, in cadence not unlike that of a bull, with three or four short grunts in a deep bass note as a final.

Old Jan regaled us with many a hunting yarn at the fireside during the long evenings, and, knowing his history, I was able to confirm the African saying that 'Imagination is not needed to tell a tale of the African wilds.' Jan told us of a noble dog of the boar-hound breed that had accompanied him in many a hard battle with big game, and how gallantly the faithful animal behaved in times of danger. He was out one day on the look-out for game, and soon, judging by the excited manner of the dog, was near something dangerous. The country was hilly, bushy, and stony, while grass of the up-country nature, long and wiry, covered the open spaces. Apparently the quarry lay in a hollow close by, and Jan, taking up a prominent position, urged his dog into the thicket, when with a discontented grunt a large lion appeared in the open for a moment, just sufficient

for Jan to give him a shot. The lion disappeared into the bush close by, giving vent to a succession of faint roars, when all became still. Jan, concluding from the silence that the beast must be dead, cautiously neared the spot, but passed within a few feet of where the lion lay wounded, and not by any means dead, for the beast sprang upon him from behind with a terrible grunt, knocking Jan clean over on to his face, with his loaded gun underneath him. At Jan's shout the dog sprang forward and seized the lion by the left ear, but only for a moment, as the lion turned and with a stroke of his paw disembowelled the faithful beast. However, short as the time was, it enabled Jan to place the muzzle of his gun to the lion's head, and thus end the fight. 'I felt no fear,' said Jan, 'but when it was all over I sat and wept like a child, partly from shock, and mostly for loss of my "groot geel hond" (big yellow dog). The lion's skin I sold for £2, 10s. to buy powder and lead with,' concluded Jan, and not all our blandishments could get another word out of him that evening, as he rolled out his blankets and lay down by the fire, thus paying another tribute of regret to a faithful friend. Good rugged old Jan, many a cruel storm has passed over your bleached head, but left the heart where it should be in every man!

Breaking up early next day we passed some igneous rock on the river bank covered by innumerable guinea-fowl, but scorning these as unworthy of a shot, I walked ahead of the expedition, and about midday was rewarded by a sight of several herds of letzwee buck on the open plain before me, dotted about like so many drops of blood on the rolling grass. Unfortunately the opportunity offered no cover for stalking, and, do my best, four hundred yards was the nearest I could get to them. The situation was pressing, a crowd of hungry bearers were clamouring for food, and the troop of goats we had taken along were only to be eaten in cases of absolute necessity, so I chose the alternative, and, after a long guess at the distance, finally took a standing shot which fell short. But before the surprised game scurried off to their usual retreat—

the reeds—I got three more shots into them, and had the satisfaction of seeing one down and another limping behind the crowd very sick and then dropping, before the last bounding object gained cover. On coming up Jan offered to bet me £5 that in three weeks' time he would make a bigger bag than I. On totalling up at the termination of time, Jan was some twenty short, although he got the first buffalo. He had not taken into consideration that my previous hunting experiences on the high flats, and in the bush veldt, and above all my youth, gave me a great advantage over him.

When we camped for the night the bearers brought us a large potato-like bulb, nine inches in diameter, which when split open yielded a clear fluid rather acrid to the taste. The bushmen highly value this plant, which they call 'makuri,' as it supplies them with fluid in the dry sandy wastes in and about the Kalahari desert. With another root of a similar nature called 'mamahude,' much like a sweet potato in shape, makuri is often the only substitute for water, and without these they would perish of thirst on their long marches across the arid wastes, unless they are fortunate enough to fall in with melons, that also grow in the desert occasionally in large patches.

Towards sunset Jan and I, strolling along the river banks, spied a large crocodile fast asleep, apparently thoughtless and lifeless after the manner of crocodiles. Firing simultaneously at about thirty yards we probably dealt him his death-blow, but giving a turn or two he made off into the water, and that was the last we saw of him—the usual experience of crocodile hunting in rivers and lakes.

On June the 28th, as we proceeded up the river, I shot a large otter in the water, and while I was getting him out Hammar went ahead and had one of the wildest experiences of hippo life the most gluttonous seeker into Nature's secrets could desire.

Through the bushes and grass he saw what he mistook for a smooth rock lying on the river bank in some open bush, and proceeded to investigate this odd block with thoughts of

erratic boulders transported by ice action into this out-of-the-way corner of our creation. Judge of his surprise, while he was searching for a convenient corner to knock a piece off, when he discovered a movable ear attached to the unmistakable head of a vast sleeping hippo. Hammar made for his gun, which he had placed against a tree close by, and by the time he reached it, the hippo, who by this had also realised that something unusual was transpiring, got up and took a look at Hammar, who promptly fired, shooting a little high for the brain. The hippo, with a grunt worth a reputation to a comedian on the stage, made for the river close by, and so did several others of these large piggy animals, hitherto unobserved by Hammar, that were scattered about in the neighbouring brushwood, each with its own note of discontent at being disturbed, causing a harmony, Hammar said, compared to which 'new music' would have been like the piping of a canary. The whole thing passed so quickly that Hammar had no time to reload and get another shot in before they were all in the water splashing as only frightened hippo can. We waited in the vain hope that the wounded one was dead and would rise to the surface, as one expects every well-conducted hippo that has been properly shot to do after several hours' immersion in the water. But whether Hammar's shot did not take proper effect, or whether the hippo's fright carried him beyond our reach below the reeds in the river, remains one of the secrets known only to the Chobe. However, Hammar set us the keynote to a good laugh, in which we all joined as only perfectly healthy men can.

I wish once and for all here to do away with the fallacy that a hippo spouts like a whale. Several pictures, notably one painted by the amiable and kind-hearted T. Bains, depict the animal sending up spouts of water into the air. In my varied travels, having had opportunity to watch these beasts at close quarters for hours at a time, I never observed this phenomenon. The nearest approach to it is when the animals rise to the surface to respire, when often they blow out the air contained in their vast lungs, before actually reaching the surface of the water, with

a puff, and thus perhaps the water above the nostril is displaced suddenly upward, forming a cloud of spray. Or again, if the air from this warm-blooded animal is projected into the cool morning air, a vapour, similar to the breath of a human being on a frosty day, is formed. Then, as the beast suddenly raises its head, the water remaining on the exceptionally flat head, for the moment, streams down the sides. These phenomena combined may lead a superficial observer to erroneously conclude that the hippo is spouting.

CHAPTER VI

The natives fear us—Capture of an old Mashubia—River overflowing its banks—Honey bird leads boys to python—Native dance—Shoot puku buck—Underground hive of peculiar bees—White buffalo—Blue wildebeest hunt—Hunter's delicacies—Swamps' tsetse fly—Scenery of Chobe—Game abundant—Narrow escape from fire—Blotchy appearance of natives accounted for by fire—Braying skins.

THE inhabitants along the river banks showed the greatest alarm at our approach and fled incontinently in their canoes to the islands in the reeds where it was impossible to follow them, even if we had possessed a boat, owing to the passages in the tangled masses of floating reeds being securely hidden after they had passed, by the leaves falling back into position, and thus obscuring the line of flight. We were very anxious to open up negotiations with these Mashubia, as they are called, for the purpose of trading corn, and obtaining canoes to transport our goods up the river in, so as to give our somewhat heavily laden bearers an occasional rest. But to all our blandishments and shouts they only answered that they took us for the much dreaded Matabele, and that they knew the terrible animals that accompanied us (our donkeys) would tear them to pieces as soon as they came near us. Determined, however, to make friends with them if possible, Jan and I, starting early one morning far ahead of the column, came upon an ancient Mashubia man mending his canoe on the river bank. The old chap was probably somewhat deaf, for, with his back to us and engrossed in his work, he was quite unaware of our presence. Laying down his gun, old Jan gently stalked up to him, quietly lifted him in his arms, and carried him about a hundred yards inland where he set him down. The horrified terror of the old man was markedly expressed in his countenance. He showed,

indeed, every symptom of physical and mental fear. However, we had gained our object, and when the bearers came up later in the afternoon we tried to set the old man's fears at rest by giving him a knife and several small presents, telling him we were friends and wanted to speak to his people. The old man listened in great astonishment, as he had apparently expected that we would at least do him some grievous harm, if not eat him, and when he was told to go, rose hesitatingly, and with wavering steps left the circle around him. The strain was too great, for after going some twenty yards away he returned with uncertainty and fear expressed in every line of his face, and squatted down, afraid to leave us. Only when Jan and I placed him in his canoe and shoved him off from the shore did he sufficiently realise that escape was possible. Then when he got near his secret passage in the reeds, with a few vigorous strokes of his paddle, creditable to his age and fear alike, he disappeared into the silent mass, and that was the last we saw of him or his. Thus we failed to make friends with the Mashubia here, owing to the terrible awe these people stood in of the Matabele, who occasionally despatched raiding parties even to these distant regions to loot ivory and other articles dear to the native mind, and from whom these terrified people could not disassociate us.

These Mashubia, a tribe of blacks now inhabiting the lower stretches of the Chobe, are the remnant of an inland tribe that overran this country during the Basuto occupation from Sibotwana's time to the death of Sepopo, of whom they were staunch supporters. They are of fine physique and large build; especially is the upper portion of their bodies well developed, owing to their mode of life, which involves constant rowing in canoes about the river. The facial expression is coarse, with strong prognathous jaws and dolichocephalous heads. The lower limbs are weak, though straight, with an enormous length of shin bone. After Sepopo's tragic end, and during the reassertion of Barotzi power and the Ngwana Weena troubles, this tribe was cut up, some taking refuge in the inaccessible Chobe swamps, while the

remainder under a chief called 'Lozani' took up their quarters in the hitherto unoccupied Mababe district.

Proceeding up the river under great difficulties, as the previous rainy season had been an unexceptionally heavy one, the river, according to Jan, being fourteen feet higher than usual, and consequently overflowing its banks, we were obliged to abandon the usual native footpaths and splash along through jungle and swamp with nothing to guide us but the outer edge of the water, which, according to the configuration of the country, often extended miles into the monotonous bush-grown sandy wastes.

While resting at midday on July 3rd, some of the bearers followed a honey bird that invitingly twittered to us from a neighbouring tree. They returned shortly with some beautiful honey and a large python, to which the treacherous little feathered demon had taken them, a not unusual occurrence in this self-constituted little guide's behaviour. Usually he leads one on, flying backwards and forwards as if in stages along the route, excitedly twittering till overtaken, then resuming his journey till he at last brings one to a bee's nest, when he quietly waits until the honey is taken out and then consumes the crumbs left by the plunderers, who usually place a cake of honey aside to satisfy the desire for sweet things of their kind little guide, whose motive is clearly not so disinterested as at first might appear. It is as well, however, when following up the honey bird to go well armed, as he frequently leads one, whether by accident or intention I know not, across dangerous game.

Some of the boys, as soon as the python was descried being carried to camp, made a rush for a share of the meat, which is considered by them to be a great delicacy. Seizing hold of one end, others rushed to the support of their friends at the other, and in a twinkling a good tug of war was organised, whereof the result was largely biassed in favour of those at the head end by the convulsions of the snake, which was only half dead, and, acting under the sudden stimulus of the pull, struggled fiercely to get free, and in its contractions simply

hauled the struggling boys, some six in number, over to the other side, and then twined a third of its length round two of the boys, tying them immovably to one another. An axe speedily settled the difficulty, and before long portions of this leviathan were roasting on a fire improvised by the boys for the occasion. We tasted of the fine-looking white meat out of curiosity, which, except for a slightly musty taste, much resembled the flesh of fowls. I must confess, however, that our natural repugnance to such a beast formed an effectual barrier to swallowing the morsels we had taken into our mouths, and we spat them out amidst mutual laughter.

A recollection of my early hunting days in the Bush Veldt occurs to me, when, in company with several other hunters, a honey bird led us directly to a fierce old black rhinoceros bull lying asleep in the long grass under a tree. We did not observe the rhinoceros until we were quite close upon him, as he was hidden by the long grass, and besides, our attention was directed more towards the bird, who sat twittering excitedly in the branches as if joyful over having completed some virtuous act. The first intimation of the rhinoceros we got was his suddenly rising, and charging at the centre of our party. We scattered without loss of time, and before the brute was twenty yards away he came down with a crash from the volley we gave him as he passed. I may mention that there was no honey in that tree, and that the bird disappeared, probably frightened by the fusilade we gave the rhinoceros on his appearance. Yet before the rhinoceros appeared, the bird had the behaviour, to all our minds, of having completed his mission, as he remained in the tree till we came up, and did not fly on beyond, as is usual when leading one to the goal. He was apparently satisfied that his share of the work was done.

Jan brewed us a famous beer from the honey, and that night, in recognition of the occasion, the natives held a dance unsurpassed for wildness under the great trees by firelight.

Two rows of about twenty dancers were formed some fifteen feet apart, illumined by a large fire at each end, each row repre-

senting a separate sex. Then two dancers, one from each row, capered towards one another to the accompaniment of a weird chant and rhythmical clapping of hands, and circled round each other in grotesque attitudes, performing wild leaps in the air: the dance continued to the encouraging shouts of the onlookers, until, exhausted, the actors retired, to be superseded by another pair. Louder and louder grew the chant, fiercer the clapping of hands, exciting the dancers to their utmost efforts, until the performers, having had enough of this, the chant suddenly altered, and the dance began to assume a character which, for the sake of decency, had to be put a stop to. This is called the dance of sexes, and, in the seclusion of their own homes, is carried out to extremes not permitted in civilised countries.

Next day, some miles ahead of the column, I came across some puku buck, but for the life of me could not get the range, as the size of the buck was unknown to me, and I estimated them larger than actually was the case, firing three shots at them with a two hundred and fifty yards' sight, while they stared at me in amazement as the bullets flew over their backs. I then realised that the range was one hundred and fifty yards, and with the fourth shot hit a young ram hard, when the troop of four immediately took to flight. I found the stricken buck dead two hundred yards away under a large tree. About the size of a small donkey, but not so thickset, the puku possesses a skin covered with longish coarse red brown hair, lighter under the belly, with sharp-pointed horns gracefully curved forward adorning the head. This being a young ram, the horns, seven inches long, and perfectly straight, had not yet attained the forward curve characterising the mature animal. The females have no horns. Much to my regret I cannot describe this buck more accurately, as they appear to be rare here, and this was the only one we killed.

While skinning the puku under the tree before mentioned, we were startled by a peculiar tympanic grunt occurring at short intervals, frightening my boys, who dragged the buck away to a more open spot, when the sound ceased. I scouted the

neighbourhood, but could find no sign of anything. On passing the tree again, the sound was as distinct as ever, and feeling annoyed, I made a thorough search of the neighbourhood, with unsuccessful results; yet whenever I came near the tree the sound became audible, leading me to the conclusion that the tree itself was responsible in some way for this disturbance, which excited the superstitious fears of my boys to the utmost. A minute examination revealed the fact that there was a large bee nest in a hollow in the tree; and as each little labourer returned to deposit his store of provender, he caused a hum at the narrow orifice that served as entrance to the nest. With fire and axe we attacked this welcome find, and the three hundred pounds' weight or more of honey which we excavated served us for many days to sweeten our tea, our store of sugar having long since been exhausted. Honey, boiled and left in a gourd to crystallise deserves special mention as a luxurious substitute to replenish the sugar-can with in the wilds. While on this subject it is as well to mention a class of honey found underground that is manufactured by small dark bees, slightly larger than the common house fly, a source of great inconvenience, if not danger, to the inexperienced, as it contains some strong aperient matter most unwelcome to the consumer,—at least we found it so. A hive of this honey was pointed out to us by the boys, who from the resonant sound produced by stamping on the ground assured us that there was a large nest there. The entrance to the nest was a little hole in the ground about an inch in diameter, and when we dug below this we came upon a twisted structure not unlike the interior of an ant-heap, but formed of beeswax. The honey was deposited irregularly in this space, without much regard to shape; and the wax, which had a deep grey-black colour, possessed perforations through which the bees found access to the combs in recesses on beyond.

In these regions we saw 'spoor' of all kinds of bush game, including rhinoceros, giraffe, buffalo, and occasionally of elephants.

Our bearers related to us that some of the reed men had informed them of a herd of buffalo in the neighbourhood, headed

by two white bulls (albinos, probably); but as our trip was of a flying nature, much as we regretted it, we could not afford even to lose a day in search of peculiar game, but had our sport regulated by what we met along the route, and even under these limited conditions we managed to amply supply the requirements of our bearer troop and ourselves. Each day as we went along two to twelve buck were killed; but I can honestly relate that we seldom killed more than our wants actually required, while to show that we had to be on the *qui vive* all the time, a good-sized buffalo and a quagga only served to feed us overnight at one camp.

While crossing an open flat on the 1st of July we encountered a large troop of blue wildebeest—‘Antelope Gorgon’—and managed by taking up lucky positions to confuse the poor beasts to such an extent that they ran in wild terror from one to the other of us, finally circling round Hammar in the middle of the flat, with their ferocious looking heads lowered and their tails in the air, until he, having exhausted all his ammunition, drove them off by his frantic shouts to us to bring him more cartridges. One wildebeest got away with its front leg broken just above the hoof. It ran on the stump of the protruding bone with as much ease as if it were well, and all our efforts to overtake it and to put the poor brute out of its misery were of no avail, so we had to let it go. Amongst us we made a considerable bag, including a wild pig of the wart hog species, on whose finer flesh the superior members of the expedition regaled themselves right royally, whilst the natives went in for wildebeest steaks and marrow-bones, etc. Wart hog, and hippo flesh cut from the flank, mark it, are the hunter’s special delicacies, while hippo foot boiled for twenty-four hours is the choicest morsel of the South African cuisine, although when first viewed in the form of an edible it certainly has anything but a reassuring appearance. My first introduction to this delicacy, I must confess, inclined me more to take a hasty departure than to tackle it with the iron spoon my companion graciously placed in my unwilling hands for that purpose.

However, after the first mouthful, my zeal excited visible signs of distress, if not of regret, in my companion for his previous encouraging words and example, and I am afraid that my subsequently developed love for hippo shooting is not unalloyed by possibilities of boiled foot, not to mention grilled flank with 'just enough' of pepper and salt to help it down.

It is my duty to here make painful mention of many swampy offshoots from the Chobe, necessitating the offloading of refractory donkeys that had to be dragged across the oozy morasses on their sides, decidedly opposed to all idea of making any effort to help themselves. Soiled clothes, bad smells, and worse language are the paramount impressions we carried away from these parts. Oh, those horrid swamps, worse for the reason that our donkeys were badly tsetse fly bitten, and the immersion of their hides in the water would inevitably hasten their death, although donkeys show more resistance to 'fly bite' than any other domestic animals. But, given such swarms of 'fly' as we encountered, even this hardy brute will succumb, as ours eventually did, to the virulence of this pest. It has often been asserted, not without mild proof, that the donkey of all domestic animals is the only one that will survive the tsetse fly bite. I myself have seen them traverse safely the distance from Delagoa Bay to Lydenburg in the Z. A. R. in 1874, when that country was thickly infested with flies that killed cattle, horses, and even the few camels that were imported as an experiment. But when bitten by such overwhelming swarms as we experienced, poor Jack and Jenny succumb in the usual way. The most sensitive animal to fly bite is the horse, then the dog, next the ox, and last the donkey. The bites of five tsetse flies have been known to kill a horse, while it takes a much larger number to kill a dog or ox. Experiments have been made by travellers to counteract the effect of fly bite by a wash of ammonia or sheep dip. Whatever effect these may have for the moment, the subsequent and continuous bites generally are victorious in the end. My esteemed friend, Mr. Reuben Beningfield of Durban, however, declares that he has cured animals only

slightly bitten, and hastily isolated from further molestation, by a wash composed of ingredients only known to himself.

The 'fly' poison is injected into an animal in the same manner as the mosquito bites, and leaves a small diffuse lump on the bitten spot, causing much local irritation, especially as the fly attacks the least exposed parts of the animal, where the skin is thin, and it cannot be driven away by the tail. The bite is much aggravated by contact with water, and it is a well-known fact that the early rains carry off all fly-bitten cattle. The bitten animal shows signs of great lassitude, its head swells, and the joints and limbs become stiff. At this stage a merciful bullet is advisable to forestall a death of general debility and asphyxia. On cutting the beast open, one finds the subcutaneous tissue injected with a yellow serous fluid not unlike the result of some snake bites, and also the lungs injected. Beyond this I have not been able to investigate, as these episodes usually occur on a march when neither time nor opportunity is offered for scientific observation.

The goats we had with us showed no signs of being affected by fly bite, and I feel safe in the assertion that they are impervious to this poison. To mankind and all wild beasts the bite is innocuous, although surprisingly unpleasant in its sting, equal in quality to that of a good healthy wasp or bee. To illustrate the violence of the bite, let me relate that on one occasion I had already sighted the rifle at a buffalo standing looking at me some thirty yards off, and was just in the act of pulling the trigger, when a tsetse fly settled on my hand, and the sting was so acute that I had not the nerve to pull the trigger, but had first to brush the fly off, and by the movement scared the buffalo away.

The fly on the Pungwe river is, I think, slightly smaller and darker in hue than those on the Upper Zambesi or Chobe rivers.

We had to pay the penalty of our day's sport with the wildebeest, as our bearers, now full of meat to more than repletion, a condition of body always tending to indolence, and in this

case to insolence, refused to move at the word of command. However, I adopted a plan that answered very well, simply taking my gun and going ahead, when some hours later they followed on, and amicable relations were restored. We thus learned a lesson unfavourable to a repetition of yesterday's experience, and henceforth we avoided the overfilling of our boys' stomachs with meat, unless the expedition was stationary.

The scenery at this point of the river was unique, mainly characterised by baobab trees of vast thickness, whose shiny grey magnificence towered aloft not unlike huge inverted carrots in shape, with their roots in the air, and graceful palms, 'Kolahni,' rising from little knolls scattered across the expansive flat, with their long, rough, black stems often sixty feet high, topped by a tously bush of circular palm-leaves. I recall to mind the oppressive dreariness of this aspect as we gazed on the landscape through a thin, grey mist rising from the immense flat of reeds forming the Chobe swamp on our right, to the music of the grumbling roar of the first lion we had heard since leaving Panda Matenga. Remarkable also was the fine white dust rising in little clouds at our feet as we occasionally crossed little patches of open ground.

Game was very abundant here, and our bearers went frantic because we would not settle down to hunt meat for them. However, by putting eleven to fifteen miles daily behind us before providing a supper, we managed to draw them from one camp to another. Often on the line of march, sassaby, letzwee, reed buck, rooi buck, wildebeest, giraffe, etc., would stare at us from a safe distance; but unless a day's march was accomplished, nothing would tempt us to shoot. Then, when near the camping ground, the shock of our guns would set the air ringing, inciting the bearers to rush up, each in hopes of securing his favourite titbit, generally the fat round the kidneys, or the termination of the alimentary tube, a sure spot to find a little fat in, no matter how lean the carcase might be. All hunters will agree with me how gruesome the daily meal is without any fat; for game at this season of the year is especially dry, while it is

almost impossible to transport fat on an extensive trip like ours—rather would we depend upon replenishing our stock from time to time from occasional hippo or eland that might fall to our guns. We also eschewed such luxuries as sugar and flour, owing to their weight, and lived, when we got it, on native corn to our meat. Of tea, however, we had abundance; and on the luxury of this noble beverage, made with the beautiful Chobe water, and mixed with the milk of our goats, after a hard day's march, my pen would gladly dilate. When, however, we obtained a supply of hippo or eland fat, the jubilation in camp might have led an onlooker to conclude that something 'stronger' was answerable for the gaiety prevalent amongst us. Franz literally became intoxicated on the quantities he absorbed, going from pot to pot of the bearers' messes, into each of which he had cunningly inserted a titbit. He appropriated his own when done, and as it was not weighed into the pot, he never came off second best in the transaction. The fat-absorbing qualities of a native, especially of Hottentot blood, under hunting conditions are such that even an Esquimaux might tremble for his reputation in a contest.

Owing to the accumulated masses of tangled grass and dry wood lying under the trees in the neighbourhood, that perhaps for years had been undisturbed by fire, we nearly had the expedition burnt out, when Franz, for reasons of his own, one day ignited the grass on the route. While resting at midday a sudden wind brought the flames on to us with great rapidity, surrounding us by fire with no escape even by the river, where the banks were lined with last year's dead reeds, likely to burn fiercely when once caught by the flames. Hastily lighting a counter fire, and depositing the goods on the burnt space thus laid bare, we lay down on the scorched ground to get as low as possible from the suffocating smoke till the danger was past, but the experience of that sharp, stinging, blinding smoke inculcated a lesson not likely to be forgotten in the future.

Our march was enlivened by the sight of many bright birds, such as the blue jay with its uncanny note; beautiful bee-eaters,

whose bright metallic colouring radiated the sparkling light like gems in the sunshine; and also by the warbling of swarms of golden weaver-birds, whose motley melody struck the ear in varying cadence, modulated by gentle breezes that stirred the pendent foliage rustling into life. Then at night resting under some mighty tree with a cloudless sky overhead, while the babbling of the camp merged into one continuous murmur, occasionally broken by the declamation of some excited native narrating past adventures, with the sparkling fires throwing mysterious shadows around, how well we felt recompensed for the day's exertion, it were vain to tell. Only the thought of what was before us disturbed the harmony—the thirst to see the unknown, with a myriad anxieties for the future: Would we reach our goal, and would we be there to see the results of our journey recorded? or would, through some contrary influence, the objects of our expedition be nullified, and the account of it never reach the outer world? Such thoughts, better left alone, would plague one in the still of night, banishing sleep, and bringing memories of the civilised world, until in sheer desperation one would pace the darkness between the fires until calmer reflection brought rest to refresh one for the coming day.

A remarkable irregular white blotchiness of the skin on the natives' abdomens, which had aroused our curiosity, found explanation in the fact that the natives, during the cold nights on which they slept out without clothing, built themselves little oblong frameworks of green wood, sixteen inches high, on top of which they made fires. Sleeping under this for warmth, the burning embers often fell through the framework on to their naked skins, raising blisters which, when healed, left the affected part white or grey. It is from this circumstance, widely spread in South Africa, that the Boers have humorously nicknamed the tribes living west of the Transvaal 'Vaalpense,' or 'grey bellies.' Owing to their nakedness, there was a great demand for skins suitable for covering by our boys, the letzwee buck being the favourite, and it was not long before each bearer had a skin attached to his bundle, waiting for a favourable opportunity to

tan it after their manner. The skin is rolled up tightly with a layer of damped sand in its folds, and then tied up with bast, when it is struck a succession of heavy blows with a suitable bludgeon until it is quite soft. It is then covered with a thin layer of fat on the inside, and rubbed between the hands until it is as flexible as an ordinary blanket, though much more serviceable, owing to its stoutness and texture, while the long, soft hair on the outside makes it a very pleasant addition to one's bed-clothes, although for hygienic reasons we preferred to adopt those not already in use by the natives.

CHAPTER VII

Arrive at Mameeles—Engage two Mosaros—Discontented bearers—Pig and quagga hunt—Adventure with baboons—Depth of Chobe—Dye clothes with Mopani juice—How skerm is built—Fight with the bearers—Hammar and the rooi buck—Strange behaviour of wounded waterbuck—The Sunta swamp—Paul's tale of the lions—Reach Linyanti district—Strange flight of bullet—How natives hunt game when river overflows.

AT Mameeles drift, a recognised travelling crossing of the Chobe, we failed to bring natives from their dwellings on the opposite side in answer to our signals of fires and gunshots. The Chobe swamp here is many miles broad, with the usual islands dotted about in its expanse, from whose dark-green foliage the Kolahni palm rears its lofty head high into the misty atmosphere.

A remarkable feature of the country lying between Lejuma and here is the quantity of game-pits we daily passed. Twelve feet long, four feet broad, and perhaps twelve feet deep, these form the desideratum of a native hunter when covered over with sticks and leaves hidden on top by a thin layer of sand. A long fence is also necessary to direct the course of driven game in the direction required, until, breaking through the treacherous covering, it is precipitated into the wedge-shaped pit, there to find its end by native spears. Amusing tales are often related of how, when lions or other dangerous game have been entrapped in these pits, the natives, divided between fear and hunger (for lions' meat is also eaten by them), are much embarrassed to encompass the death of their quarry without injury to the much-prized skin, or without sustaining lesions to their own no less valued integument. We were told that a final resort to suffocation by smoke is the most reliable alternative to gain this object. These pits are no less a source of danger to travellers while shooting, for it is not beyond the

range of daily possibility to stumble into a hole while in the heat of chase.

While out shooting I came upon two Mosaros, or real bushmen of the desert, of a dirty gamboge yellow colour; and when their surprise at seeing me was over, they consented to accompany us to Matambanja's. In figure they were tall, lean, their extremities thin to delicacy, with prominent buttocks and abdomens. Large-heeled flat feet and prominent knee-bones and elbow-joints seemed to compensate them for lack of muscle in the legs and arms; while their countenances and heads, covered with tufty wool, bore distinct resemblance to those of the ordinary Hottentot.

Here we also saw a bird looking uncommonly like a cross between a stork and vulture, but failed to bag the specimen, so we can only guess it must have been a 'marabou.'

Amongst our boys were four huge Batokas, very long and stout in body, and powerful-looking fellows. We could tell by their behaviour when trouble was brewing. They possessed a musical instrument, to the 'tinc tinc' of which they ventilated their grievances. 'Tinc tinc,' the white man is bad; 'tinc tinc,' the white man will not pay us our due; 'tinc tinc,' the white man is leading us to death. With such unpleasant reflections, heard by all the bearers, those wretches worked up the feeling against us, and for the second time our bearers came and held a great 'Mohuka' palaver with us regarding our destination, with all the gravity peculiar to their race. We had noticed a growing sullen unwillingness to obey orders, as they were now approaching country beyond the hunter's limit from Panda Matenga; and with all distrustfulness animating their suspicions, added to their growing insolence from overfeeding, they stretched our forbearance to untold limits, knowing as we did that they only had to march off to bring our expedition to an untimely end, for from the local inhabitants we could expect no assistance. With smiling faces and heavy hearts we promised them that they should return from Matambanja's, and that there they should all receive the notes promised them

to obtain blankets, brass wire, etc., from George Westbeeck, as previously arranged. It appears that the time allowed to reach various points on the route had been much underestimated owing to the overflow of the river, necessitating a good deal of going round through bush and jungle, and that we were to suffer for it. Our only hope was to keep Jan Veyers in good humour to stay with us, for without him we doubted whether they would risk the return journey, and Jan was engaged to see us as far as Matambanja's. Jan's introduction was to procure us bearers from there on to the Portuguese boundary, from whence we would have found our way to Mossammedes on the west coast. After considerable haggling, and more promises, they at last consented to go on. But the annoyances of these episodes caused us many bitter moments, especially as we noticed a kind of lawlessness, common to people in the Veldt, gradually developing amongst them. It must be borne in mind that our carriers were not of the regular bearer class, like those composing caravans on the east coast of Central Africa, where this means of transport is a recognised regular institution, while here it is the exception, natives only accompanying hunters here on their short flights from a given centre, to carry back the ivory and skins obtained, with the primary object of gorging themselves on the meat shot. The cause of our troubles was aggravated by bidding farewell to Blockley's coloured hunter, who turned off here with his boys to look for ostriches, hunting in the desert away from the river on his way back home.

To avoid further palaver, we marched on some eleven miles, and the bearers quietly followed. Next day Hammar, who had been rather unlucky with game of late, Jan, and myself were walking just in front of the bearers, when we came upon a large troop of quagga grazing amongst the trees some eighty yards ahead, with whom several wart hogs had associated themselves. Hammar, who was accorded first shot, bowled over a fine stallion. The game, evidently mistaking the direction of their danger, charged down on us, headed by an

enormously tusked old boar; and in less time than it takes to write it, pigs, bearers, quaggas, and ourselves were mixed in one wild *mêlée*, each bearer throwing down his load to join in the hunt. We were too mixed up to shoot, but drove the game around until, in despair, here and there a confused quagga would quietly stand to be assegaied. Five and a pig was the total after the fun was over, so we adjourned for the day, the natives in wild excitement at this windfall of their favourite flesh. It is an old saying amongst them that lions and themselves, being gifted with higher epicurean qualities, mutually find quagga the most palatable meat. We, however, could not overcome our repugnance to the horsey smell attendant upon the cutting up, thus gaining for ourselves the compassion of the natives, and, what was more to the purpose, the monopoly of the pig, whose roasted head next morning, hot from the coals in which it had been qualifying for our breakfast overnight, recalls the most pleasurable recollections.

The country about here was disagreeably thorny, reminding me of an old brown-and-yellow striped coat I wore, now discarded in favour of Pikinini, my bed carrier, since the last effort had placed it beyond the pale of even 'interior' respectability. To my surprise, I found that with a grey jacket I could not approach game nearly as well as heretofore, and ascribe this alteration to the fact that animals when gazing at me in the striped jacket in some manner connected me with something not so fearsome as when clothed in other garments. I have profited largely by this hint on other shooting trips since.

It is also about here that one of the strangest experiences with baboons became my lot. Walking alone in search of game, I came upon a troop of some seventy baboons accompanied by many rooi buck, with whom they seemed on the best of terms. Wishing to pass on in search of larger game between the river and where they were, I strolled slowly along some fifty yards off, when a large lady baboon, evidently stricken by an amatory arrow from the little god, came gently towards

me half upright on three legs, holding out her hand, and making use of expressions doubtless of the most amiable and endearing nature, but to my untutored ears sounding only like 'Ngo nga, ngo nga.' Shortly a male joined her, and he also, to my surprise, with outstretched hand began to 'ngo nga, ngo nga,' while the whole troop stared at me in amiable surprise. The position was ludicrous in the extreme. 'Ngo nga,' I could not understand; and fearing to excite these ferocious beasts to enmity by any demonstration on my part, although uncontrollably desirous to sit down and have a friendly chat, I quietly edged off to the river, prepared to dive for it in case of necessity. But my amiable hosts seemed regretfully to understand that there was a difference between us, luckily not of a character requiring corporeal vindication, and so dropped behind; while I, who had possibly missed a chance of being 'King of all the Baboons,' went on and shot the largest koodoo it ever has been my luck to encounter, with beautiful spiral horns, which I regret to this day had to be left behind, as had all the skins and heads we shot on this trip, owing to want of means to transport them. Still we consoled ourselves with the fact that koodoo marrow spread on slices of broiled liver is also a worthy component part of a koodoo's anatomy, although the marrow has a tendency to harden on the palate, an experience not forgotten in connection with plum-pudding of the boarding-school kind in our early days.

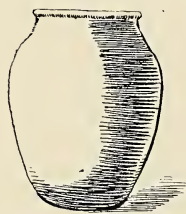
Where the winding river channel approaches the bank, we found the water extremely deep, though clear, often over forty feet, and of a dark-brown colour. This river would be navigable for large craft along its winding channels if the openings in the reeds were only properly laid out, thus giving water communication in the interior from the Victoria falls up to where the last falls are formed by the Chobe leaving the hills from the west, a distance of several hundred miles, and also permitting access to the Okavango river for shallow craft at a point to be described later, where the two rivers are connected by a four foot deep channel at certain seasons of the year, pro-

viding many hundreds of miles suitable for navigation against the ordinary two-knot current.

Along this bank we passed many landing-places of the natives from the islands, who come to the mainland to replenish their exhausted stock of fuel, and also to cultivate the soil, winning corn, pumpkins, millet, sweet potatoes, etc., as the result of their labours, while for safety they occupy their island homes at night, guarded by the impenetrable masses of reeds, through which they alone of human beings can move freely.

Our bearers commenced to show signs of nettle-rash—'urticaria'—from over-feeding on fatty meat, necessitating an application to the medicine-chest, with satisfactory results. They were much surprised to experience that so little medicine as we gave them should have the desired effect, and gained a high opinion of our powers as medicine-men.

The new clothes donned by the expedition at this point, being from their colour much too conspicuous for hunting purposes, were dyed in a concoction of 'mopani' broth, boiled all night in a large pot from the bark. The result from immersion in this was most satisfactory, giving first a delicate rose-colour, gradually changing during use into dirty brown, most suitable for the purpose, although in civilisation certain to attract un-



NATIVE POT

welcome attention. We picked up an earthenware pot in a deserted village, burnt yellowish white, showing that the natives are roughly acquainted with the art of pottery. This pot was three feet high, quite a foot in diameter, in shape like the salt-pots of the fishermen on the Baltic Sea, without any handles. From the natives we learned that we were opposite Seke-

letu's old camp, near Linyanti. Here we made a particularly comfortable 'skerm' for the night. While sleeping in the open it is usual to build a semicircular wall of interlaced branches and trees, with its back to the wind. Inside this structure, which goes by the name of 'skerm' in the interior, the goods were placed in convenient positions for the night, while we rolled out

our blankets on a layer of cut grass, and, with cheerful fires lighting up the open space in front at our feet, passed the night in slumber. This skerm is all that is necessary for protection in fine weather. When it rains it is otherwise. For the many months we traversed the central basin of South Africa, the glorious weather necessitated no other provision than this for our shelter.

On July the 9th a great row amongst our boys, who started fighting over portions of meat killed that day, necessitated the interference of Gaula (Jan's hunting name) and myself, with cudgels, in the interests of peace. We utilised the occasion to pay off old scores on the bullies in the camp; and it is with some satisfaction I relate bringing to his knees a gigantic Batoka, whom I had marked some time before as one of the ringleaders of discontent, with a succession of blows on his adamant skull that would have called for a coroner's inquest if applied to a civilised head. Gaula, hard pressed, resorted to his gun, letting it off amongst three raving boys, whose excitement led them to extremes. The shot, intentionally fired wide, startled them into submission, thus terminating a battle of sticks not behind a good Donnybrook festival, where every one hits the other with most impartial amicability. Of course, Jan received a severe reprimand for his indiscretion in using fire-arms; for should the bearers once get the idea that their lives were not safe, we felt that they would desert us on the first opportunity.

Along the river banks we passed many pans of beautiful clear water teeming with wild-fowl, while game was very plentiful. Rooi buck and letzwee we commenced to look upon as hardly worth a shot, and only when short of meat, or near a camping ground, condescended to destroy them. Hammar, who wanted a snack for lunch, one day fired into a troop of rooi buck, downing two with one shot at about eighty yards. When he proceeded to bleed them, they both had enough life left to show fight, jumping up and butting Hammar severely, while he with his long dagger defended himself, now on the ground, then

up again, digging and stabbing at his assailants in a whirl of man and buck, so utterly ludicrous to us onlookers that we, instead of responding to his shouts for assistance, knowing, of course, that he was in no serious danger, stood and shrieked out our merriment into the forest, stamping with glee, until in the natural course of events the buck were too weak to rise any more. Hammar, who was very much excited with the encounter, and also out of breath, justly took a contrary view to ours of the case, and we had to spend a great deal of genuine contrition and diplomacy in order to re-establish the usual harmony in camp. But, as old Jan privately confided to me, I couldn't have helped laughing, even if it had been my old mother in Hammar's shoes.

Just before camping one evening, a troop of water buck appeared in front of us, and, firing at the smallest doe, as being the most tender for the pot, I was surprised to see the poor beast step out and walk towards me. She came up to within seven yards, and lay down staring at me, with her gentle eyes wide open in wonder, while the blood streamed from her nose, for she was shot through the lungs, until Hammar, who came up, begged me to put the poor beast out of its misery. His voice startled the creature, or broke the spell under which she was evidently labouring, for with a few bounds she gained the edge of the bush, where she fell with a crash. Such incidents make it difficult for sportsmen to shoot for shooting's sake.

It is not my intention to give the record of slaughter on this trip, or to enumerate each hunting incident as it transpired, and I will content myself by occasionally relating the most unique hunting events which occurred. Otherwise I fear that the reader, as well as myself, would feel a weariness of detail in this period of our experiences.

Hammar, to whom I owe a lifelong debt for his sturdy support throughout the subsequent difficulties and dangers on this journey, here displayed his usual thoroughness by the diligence with which he fulfilled the onerous duties of his department, namely, the accurate mapping out of the route,

with all the necessary details, sitting up all night after a hard day's march to obtain star observations, correcting calculations, etc., his work resulting in the excellent map we are able to place before the public.

On July the 9th we reached the 'Sunda' or 'Sunta' river, so named by Livingstone—a foul swamp, for which only abhorrence remains in my recollection. It may be banked with magnificent vegetation, and extend itself unknown lengths into the desert, and pride itself on having a current to which different travellers accord different directions. I ruthlessly laid its secret bare after three days' investigation, involving much hard exertion through its foul reeds and stinking bed. Yes, Sunta, your mystery is explained. When the river rises, the water flows upward; and when the river falls, you reluctantly part with your ill-gotten fluid, contaminated by your contact, to lower levels. This have I done for you in return for your clammy attentions, and for the separation from Paul, who carried all the expedition's available cash, my last £200, that should have seen us right through to the West Coast.

While exploring the Sunta, Paul got separated from the expedition by accident, and disappeared. He had been chosen, as the most trusted servant we had, to carry the expedition's money and a few light valuables in a small portmanteau, for the better protection of which he had also been intrusted with a muzzle-loading gun and ammunition. We feared that by some process known only to himself he had discovered the value of his load, and decided to appropriate the lot. Bitterly did we wrong poor Paul, who, being lost, found a log on which he safely navigated the Sunta at its comparatively narrow though deep mouth, trusting that when we had found a crossing we would come down the left bank to its junction with the Chobe, in which conclusion he was justified; for on the third day after his disappearance we came upon him despondently sitting by a small, strong log hut he had fashioned for protection; and judging from his tale, the hut was none too strong for the purpose for which it was built. It appears that Paul, on a previous

hunting trip with Selous, had crossed at the junction while the water was low, and forgetting the present height of the river, instinctively made for this point, while the expedition turned off to the left at the water's edge. Paul wandered about, disconsolately looking for us, and stumbled across a large troop of elephants whose tracks we had seen in our upward course; and then, thinking we had found a means of crossing the Sunta, he also crossed in the manner before mentioned, and searched the opposite side for our tracks. Towards evening he shot a pig with one of the three bullets in his possession, and making a skerin, prepared to renew his search for us next day. Told in Dutch, his tale now became most exciting:—

‘It was hardly dark when some lions came to “ask for the pig”; but taking this up a high tree with me, I spent the night in great discomfort, as only those who have tried it can know. Next morning, leaving the meat in the tree, tied round with leaves to keep the vultures off, I went again in search of you, but could find no tracks where you had been walking, or hear any shots where you were shooting, so towards evening I came back to my meat, which luckily was as I had left it. Feeling very weary for want of sleep and grief, I fashioned a strong hut of poles, and got inside to sleep, but my thoughts troubled me very much. I had only two bullets left, and if you did not meet me soon I must walk back alone to George Westbeeck at Panda Matenga and give him your things; but it is a long, dangerous way for one man to travel alone, and I did not know what to do. The three lions came again in the night, but did not roar much, not seeming afraid of me, and I could see them close to me through the chinks in the hut. They kept going round and round, and when they could not get in they whispered to each other, just like people do. I am sure lions talk to each other like people. Then one struck the hut with his paw, and I poked the gun out, but did not fire, as I was afraid to waste my two bullets, because I might want them to shoot food with on my journey back, and, baas, my heart was sore! When daybreak came the lions left, and I went to look at a fire that

appeared on ahead, hoping it was your fire ; but when I got there, I found they were only natives, who laughed at me, and said that to-morrow they would come and kill me and take my gun, and they would not tell me if they had seen you or not. So again I went to my hut and made it stronger against the lions, who came again in the night, and struck at the hut, and whispered like before, and I was nearly mad, and cried all night. Next day I just sat still thinking until you came. Then I felt as if my heart was opened wide, and the sunshine streamed into it and made me warm and glad, as I am now.'

The now deserted town of Linyanti lies opposite the Sunta mouth on the North Chobe bank, with a large island in the reeds dividing the river into two channels.

A remarkable incident, to which I have only obtained the solution since accurately studying the trajectory curve of missiles fired from rifles, occurred in the neighbourhood of the Sunta. Being some miles away from the column, I fired a signal shot to gather from the answering fire the exact whereabouts of the expedition. Not to waste the shot, I fired at a pigeon sitting on a tree at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and cut off its head. At the time Hammar and Jan were sitting side by side on a fallen stump about two miles off. Suddenly they became aware of a whirring noise, like that of an angular stone hurtling through the air, increasing momentarily in intensity, and pop, the bullet dropped between them in the sand, whence they dug it up. On reaching them over half an hour later, they related the incident to me, which I accepted with more than the usual grain of salt to make it go down. However, Hammar assures me again in the presence of others that the facts related are perfectly correct, and so I record them.

Along the banks of the river the natives, taking advantage of the annual rise of the water where it overflows its banks, construct long rows of impenetrable wooden fences, along which they drive such fish as may have happened to follow the overflow into a *cul-de-sac*, formed for the purpose of capturing these finny additions to their somewhat meagre diet. We were told

also of great hunts after game in the water, when the river, suddenly rising, surprises large herds of antelope in the swamps, compelling them to swim to the mainland, or to take refuge on the islands. Then the Mashubia, seizing the opportunity, paddle amongst the swimming game in their canoes, despatching numbers, which, in their helpless confusion, fall an easy prey to the well-wielded barbed assegais of the excited hunters, who know no measure or mercy in satiating their lust after flesh and skins.

CHAPTER VIII

The Macheeayee—Rapid fall of temperature at night—Dispute with bearers—Lions disable game—Native pots—Harris buck or roan antelope—Dangerous forest fire—Cross the Sunta—Clever goats—Scared from hippo hunt in the moonlight by a lion—Buffalo and eland killed—Native language—Our course is altered by peculiar river—Jan Veyers threatens to desert.

FROM Linyanti upwards the Chobe swamps and islands are inhabited by a tribe called Macheeayee, similar in form and feature to the Mashubia, only of greater stature, some reaching the proportions of real giants, with an average height far exceeding that of any people I have ever seen. To our shouts of 'Tisa Mokorro, Mokua fitili u reka Mabele'—'Bring boats, the white men are here to buy corn'—and assurances of friendship, the Macheeayee made no response, so that we were unable to obtain this much desired edible to make our meals of meat more palatable.

On July the 10th the first mosquitos announced their presence in the usual unwelcome and assertive manner, but disappeared again as the cold evenings set in. The fact is interesting, that in winter the temperature, during the day moderately warm, sinks rapidly at night, necessitating proper blankets to eke out the warmth disseminated by a good log fire. In truth, mild frost in the early morning was no unusual occurrence at pans some distance from the river. This rapid change of temperature is owing largely to the extreme dryness of the air; for although the general altitude is about three thousand feet above sea level, the distance from any sea or water with a surface large enough to impregnate the atmosphere with its gases is too great to be of any effect, especially as both approaches from the west and east coasts to this basin are protected by higher ranges of moun-

tains, whose altitude deprives the atmosphere of any moisture it may contain before allowing it to pass to the lower-lying sandy wastes in the interior. This hydrological condition pertains only to the dry winter months. In summer, when it rains, the circumstances are altered.

Once more we had a long palaver with our bearers, who wore out our patience with their constant nagging at us on every trivial occasion, but by preternatural good nature and persuasion we finally managed to get them on.

Passing into an open glade on the march, we came upon a quagga mare disabled by lions, with a beautiful little filly by her side. The lions had bitten through the leg sinews of the mare in a manner similar to ham-stringing. The poor beast, unable to fly from us, bared her wicked-looking teeth in self-defence, until, perforated with assegai wounds, she rolled over on her side, her foal sharing the same fate, as we were unable to catch it. The natives informed us that there was nothing unusual in lions disabling game in the manner described, and that they follow it up to kill at leisure when recovering their appetites after gorging on others previously killed at the time they took this precaution to provide for a future meal.

In this neighbourhood we found several pots of burnt clay, evidently fashioned for cooking purposes as well as for storing corn. They were plain, without any attempt at ornamentation or handles, an outward curl of the lip affording sufficient holding surface to prevent them from slipping, a marked difference to Zulu pottery, which is invariably formed without any rim whatever.

We shot the first Harris buck in this district. The Harris buck is the worst treated animal in regard to name in South Africa, being variously called roan antelope, bastard eland, bastard gunsbok, bastard sable, tarka buck, and also by the name at the head of this paragraph. These differences in name do not however affect its fair claim to be second in size only to the eland amongst the antelopes.

On the night of the 13th we were much alarmed by a great

fire consuming the forest and long grass in our vicinity. Occasionally a grand crash would for the moment out-echo the crackling and hissing of the ordinary fire as some mighty forest monarch, whose trunk had been demolished by the insidious enemy, crashed earthwards, sending a cloud of sparks and flame high into the murky night, illumined in the background by columns of fiery smoke. Hastily securing ourselves by burning the grass in a circle round the camp wide enough to prevent the lapping flames from reaching across, we listened to the awful concert till weariness asserting its claims, we slept. This night the lions, who had hitherto kept aloof, probably scared by the size of our caravan, roared loud and long as if in protest against our appropriating the quagga we had robbed them of, much upsetting the stragglers about the camp, who came running in without ceremony.

While wandering in the Sunta swamp I came across a place that could be crossed, not more than three feet deep, with two nasty boggy holes in the crossing, and to this we made our way on the 14th of July, and crossed over. A donkey will not cross a muddy drift, and ours simply lay down in the mud, compelling us to drag them out of the mud-holes and haul them over the reeds on their sides through the bog, 300 yards wide, often sinking down with only their heads above water, while we subsided to our waists in the frothy fluid in our efforts to get them over. At last, on the other side, they rose with aggravating coolness, and started grazing with a 'who-would-have-thought-it?' kind of air about them, distinctly annoying. Considering, however, that the patient beasts each transported about 150 lbs. weight of our valuable ammunition, we always treated them with great care, and even as pets.

It is very amusing to watch a troop of goats in a difficult position, such as this was. Instinctively they follow the column wherever it goes, never straying, as if conscious that their safety lies in their close proximity to man. One after another they boldly took to the swamp after the first of us had trodden down the reeds, and bleating, often with nothing but their little heads

visible above water, energetically struggled on through the reeds till they reached the opposite bank, where the first arrivals, lustily shaking themselves, ran up and down in great excitement, bleating encouragement to their still submerged companions until the last had arrived. Then, as if knowing the number by instinct, they troubled themselves no further, but sedately set to work, cropping the luxuriant herbage growing on the bank in the most business-like manner until we were ready to go on again. As soon as the boys took up their loads, the head goat, our favourite white milk producer, would give the signal by a loud baa, and off they all went, following the track without giving any trouble, never straying until the next camp was reached. At night, too, they displayed considerable sagacity by always intruding themselves between the fire and the sleeping natives, and in cases of being accidentally disturbed by the boys during the night, knew how to defend the position they had marked out as their own in camp by vigorous butting at the naked feet of the natives who unwittingly kicked them in their sleep, often raising a laugh from the rest of us as the unconscious sleeper jumped up in terror at having his feet thus assailed by the sharp horns.

As the matted grass along the Sunta banks here offered great difficulty to the passage of our bearers, I went some miles ahead and set it alight to clear the track, raising no end of flame and smoke, through which myriads of birds flew in chase of grasshoppers, butterflies, and moths, screeching with excitement as they darted hither and thither in the chase. Conspicuous amongst them was a black fork-tailed bird, the size of a thrush, whose appetite and hardihood against smoke seemed to have no bounds.

As we were coming back from this task, two of the boys who accompanied me had an argument as to how long it would take the trunk of a large tree we passed to burn through so as to cause it to fall. One said it would take at least two days before the tree would fall, and the other contended that by next morning a fire would bring it down. Entering into the fun of the thing, we

made bets for a shirt, which in any case I had to pay, and then heaped a quantity of brushwood at the base of the tree, which we set alight, and saw the trunk fairly burning before we struck homewards. Next day, on passing, we found the fire had done its work, and the tree lay prone on the ground, to the huge delight of the winning boy, who donned the shirt before the envious eyes of the loser. The result of this bet was that the boys several times afterwards tried to raise my enthusiasm to the paying point by making other bets; and occasionally, when in a particularly good humour, I laughingly consented to be their victim, a little stratagem that gained me the high regard of several of our best boys. At midday we reached the junction of the Chobe river and the Sunta creek, where we picked up Paul, who had been waiting for us, as before described. Here were some enormous baobab trees, and a beautiful pan of clear water, at which we camped for the rest of the day, Hammar not being very well. Jan and I tried to get a shot at some hippopotami in the river, but the dense reeds foiled our attempts to get within range, although from an elevation on the banks we could plainly see their great heads rising every now and then, some eight hundred yards off in the water, as they came up from below to breathe and sport in the sunlight. It was a fine sight. Jan and I made up our minds to try for one at night, as the state of the moon, now nearly full, would give sufficient light to shoot by, when they came out to graze on the banks of the river.

Observations taken at the Sunta and Chobe junction prove this spot to lie seven miles south of the latitude of Panda Matenga. It is apparent here that the Chobe river bed, hitherto following a south-west by south direction, makes a bend northwards.

After supper, Jan taking his 6-bore and I the No. 4, with a wad of cotton wool tied round the end sight to make it more clear in the moonlight, we started off for the plain on our right, covered with small round bushes and short sweet grass, where we could hear the sea-cows already bellowing to each other as they left the water to go feeding. Proceeding very cautiously, with

the wind in the right quarter heading us, we felt pretty sanguine of success. We had put on dark grey clothes, not showing a vestige of white, and our faces, by this time tanned to the colour of mahogany from constant exposure, would not betray our whereabouts. Creeping slowly from bush to bush, we at last made out some huge moving objects in the distance, no doubt sea-cows grazing! Jan whispered to me not to be in a hurry, as the night was long, and on no account to fire at anything over twenty yards, a thing I was not likely to do in any case, having learnt this business from previous experience. So biding our time when the sea-cows were out of view behind the bushes as they moved about, we crawled in successive stages till we got within about eighty yards of an unsuspecting bull who was grazing further out than the rest. With due luck he would stray our way, and by a careful crawl on the flat of our stomachs we hoped to get within range if he by fortune should not get our wind. We were silently making for the last little bush intervening between the hippo and ourselves, and had almost reached its friendly shelter, when Jan, who was crawling behind, jumped up with, 'Doctor, there is a lion on us!' Mystified for a second, as my thoughts at the moment were concentrated on the hippo, I also rose, muttering something uncomplimentary to lions in general, and this one in particular, while the frightened troop of hippo, over fifteen in number, made off with a great rush for the reeds, through which they splashed, grunting, into the river. 'Where is the lion?' I asked, looking about in great annoyance; 'I see nothing.'—'Don't you see that black thing like an ant-heap there?' said Jan, pointing to a dark object about fifty yards off. 'Well, that has been moving with us every time we moved, and stopping when we stopped. I have been watching it for some time, hoping we would get within shot of the sea-cows first, but I shouted because it suddenly came swiftly towards us in a straight line, and I couldn't stand it any longer.' We watched the beast keenly, intentionally standing some five yards apart ourselves, in case it came at one of us, so that the other could get a side shot; and with the enor-

mous bored guns we carried, it was a bad lookout for the lion if he had really come within a few paces, although in the half-light one could not be sure of a shot at so small an object over ten yards. I was for advancing on the beast at once, but Jan had better counsel to give, advising that we should go home, one behind the other about five yards apart, he taking the lead. Any doubts I may have had in my mind regarding the nature of the dark object that lay crouching before us were soon dispelled; for as we proceeded to follow out Jan's plan the animal, still crawling—sliding would be a better term—on its belly, made a half-circle and came to our rear with astonishing quickness. Jan took the lead, and as I followed, walking half backwards to keep an eye on the lion, Jan warning me of obstacles in the path, the beast came on with a stealthy gliding motion most trying to our nerves. At last, after we had gone about five hundred yards, it made up its mind that we should escape unless it made a decided move, and then it glided rapidly up to within twenty yards, probably hoping that we would run away, when, of course, the programme would have had a speedy alteration in the lion's favour. Telling Jan to look out, I stopped, and he also came forward to face the beast. We shouted and waved our hats, and again I begged Jan to come on and shoot the lion. Jan however overruled me, and as it went off a little we resumed our slow march towards the camp, whose light we could see in the distance. We were just within hail of the camp when the lion made a determined effort to scare us by coming up with a rush; but fronting up as before, we set up such a shouting that the boys in the camp heard us, and, understanding the position, headed by Hammar, came running down drumming on pots, kettles, and pans with such a din that the lion, rising up on all four legs, trotted off with a growl, and we got into camp safely.

After this experience it was agreed, in a consultation held at the camp fire, that the number to go shooting hippo in the night 'from our camp' would in future not be less than five well-armed men.

On our way up the Chobe we passed another creek similar

to the Sunta, which we crossed with much difficulty, as the water was several feet deep, and then went on our way rejoicing at the numerous herds of game we saw in the open valleys occurring every few miles on the line of our march. Gaula (Jan) had a successful hunt after buffalo, dropping an enormous bull at the first shot from his 6-bore; and I, coming suddenly upon a troop of eland in the bush, was lucky enough to kill a cow at sixty yards with a single shot in the neck as she was looking at me. She was of the dun-tufted species, called by the Boers *Moff Eland*, because of the almost black tuft of mane hair growing on the top of the forehead. Unfortunately I had no time to choose a bull in the hurry, for the troop was making off into the trees before I had time to look about me. The older bulls attain an enormous size, quite 1500 lbs. in weight at a modest computation, and are often extremely fat, with very tender flesh. From one bull I killed we took quite 200 lbs. weight of pure white fat from the omentum suet and kidneys, a great acquisition to our cuisine when feeding on the usually dry meat of other game.

The customary row took place amongst the boys at the cutting up of the meat, although we portioned it out as fairly as we could, so much to each skerm. We noticed with undisguised distrust that they were eating sparingly and preparing biltong, assisting the drying process by large fires they built up underneath the meat hanging in strips from reims over the blaze.

We had reason to regard these preparations as an indication that they meant to return and desert us, for the object was plain enough; with sufficient food to carry them home they could leave us at any moment. Still, this time all passed without more disturbance than a good grumble, and the journey proceeded harmoniously.

A honey bird, twittering in great excitement, led the boys off to a great tree close by our route, and they were in high glee at the prospect of another supply of honey. Great was their disappointment, and ours too, when we found the wood of the tree so hard that our hand-axes would hardly make any impres-

sion on it, and we had to abandon the attempt to get at the honey. We passed a village on the mainland whose inhabitants surprised by our sudden appearance, fled hurriedly into the reeds, leaving all their utensils and belongings behind, so great was their haste to get out of reach of what they took to be an invading force. Paul wished to wreak his vengeance on the people for past insults at the Sunta by looting and burning their huts; but we insisted on passing without allowing any one to touch the least thing or disturb the huts, much to the general disappointment of the boys, who in true native style cannot understand why, when a thing is at their mercy, they should not 'collar the lot.'

From the natives, who had no reluctance to converse with our boys from their hiding-place in the reeds, we found that the Sesutu—Basuto—language is well understood, although the tribes inhabiting the Barotzi valley each have their own dialect as well.

On July the 17th, as we were walking along the Chobe banks, our course was intercepted by a large open creek with flowing water, fifty yards wide, running sharply, and too deep to ford. I undressed to test it, and soon found myself out of depth, but swam across to get a view on the other side to see if the stream might not possibly be a loop of the Chobe, an idea Hammar entertained. However, as no apparent sign of an inlet was visible from the position I gained, I returned, with many misgivings of possible crocodiles in the water I had to swim back over, that might by this time have been attracted to the spot by the scent left as I crossed. There was nothing for it but to make a plunge; so with a run I took a tremendous header from the bank, hoping to scare any possible vermin away by the splash, and swam across in record time. I believe that the 'boys' noticed my dilemma, for three of the best of them—Chiki, Paul, and Kalaluka—with commendable courage, jumped in simultaneously with me from their side and came to meet me. Together we reached the opposite shore, amidst considerable excitement of the other boys, who all joined in their warning not to risk swimming in these dangerous waters.

As we had no means of crossing with the packs, we had to follow this creek upwards in a west direction to find a fording-place. All this day and the next we went along the banks, several times crossing little running streams from the south that flowed into the main creek. These streams all had grass-grown bottoms, showing that this flow was only periodical, and still we were at a loss to comprehend how all this water came from the south-west, for there had been no sudden lowering of the Chobe, which would account for the current had it been a backwater, as we at first supposed. The circumstances rather supported Hammar's theory that it was a loop of the Chobe river that ran in to the river again where we first met it; but as we proceeded mile after mile along the banks, this idea waned in our minds, and we concluded that it was a separate river; yet there was that in the appearance of the stream, running with a fair current all the time, the higher up we got, that gave us the impression it was not a true river.

In the afternoon of the second day the creek appeared about thirty yards wide with a good current (about two knots) running from the south over a decided river bed with a visible clear, sandy bottom. We crossed here, finding the water nearly up to our armpits, say three and a half feet deep. There was only one explanation as to the origin of this extraordinary stream, certainly not like the Sunta receiving supplies from the Chobe; and the conjecture we now formed, that the water came from the Okavango, was subsequently confirmed by the natives ahead, who told us that at this flood-season of the year there usually was sufficient water flowing over from one river to the other to permit substantial navigation even in their largest canoes, while in the low-water season it was still open for smaller craft. We regretted very much that our circumstances would not permit us to make a complete survey to establish this statement.

Our progress along this part of the journey was necessarily very slow, owing to the denseness of the bush, through which the bearers had much difficulty in piloting their loads, which caught in the brambles at almost every turn in the most

exasperating manner. We also passed through a fine open Mopani forest. Of course, there were neither footpaths nor roads to guide our course, so we simply had to force our way through everything that we met. After crossing we soon came



MOPANI FOREST

to a flat, quite half a mile wide, covered with clear water standing about a foot deep, through which we waded to the bush-grown sand belts skirting the open before us. Almost as soon as we reached dry land beyond this water we saw a troop of hartebeest staring at us from about 150 yards distance. Jan and I, firing simultaneously, each dropped one in his tracks; and as the party was very much fatigued with the day's unusual exertion, we camped and made a meal, comprising breakfast, dinner, and supper all in one; nor did we forfeit in quantity any part of this combined meal as we sat roasting and devouring slices of liver, spread over with the hartebeest marrow that Paul skilfully extracted in bulk from the long bones for our consumption.

Hammar and I were deeply disturbed at noticing, by the very decided though quiet behaviour of the boys, that at last

things had come to a climax. Jan Veyers, too, seemed also to have had all the pluck taken out of him; and although Hammar presented him with a beautiful little rifle, and I with a valuable double twelve-bore shot gun, his cheerfulness would not return. He assumed a melancholy grieved attitude towards us, seldom conversing with anybody, and we knew something serious would happen soon. The experiences of this unknown river had put the last straw on the camel's back. But had it not been for the seriousness of our position, we could have laughed at the doleful countenances of our companions, who seemed to be full of superstition and fear at travelling further into those unknown regions. In the evening Jan called me aside and said that on Monday he would turn back without fail, this being Friday. I argued with him, reminding him of his promise to accompany us to Matambanja's and the comparatively enormous pay and presents we had made him. All to no purpose. He said that as soon as we had reached the Chobe, and he was sure we were on its banks again, his mind was made up, and he would return. I told Hammar what had happened, and we then, without betraying the situation, had a conversation with ten of our best boys, whom we had chosen because of their previous good behaviour as our personal servants; and told them that besides the presents they were to obtain at Westbeech's, we had decided to give them each a gun on their return if they remained with us to the last. The whole of them—Chiki, Kalaluka, Tshamboka, Sturman, Pikinini, Swartland, Springkant, Niki, Tabanjaba, and Jack—expressed great delight at our liberality, and we felt that should the others leave us we could still make a fight to gain our destination with these faithful fellows.

CHAPTER IX

Jan Veyers leads us into the sand-belts—Great thirst—Find water—How French died of thirst—Hyænas and lions—Grand buffalo hunt—Subsequent row with boys—Weird cry of owl—Jan Veyers remains behind—Deserted by the main body of bearers—Makes friends with the natives living in the reeds.

ON Saturday the 19th we made a start from the Hartebeest camp for the Chobe, Jan Veyers taking the lead in a north-north-westerly direction through the sand-belts. We tried to induce him to go due north-east that we might reach the river sooner, for it appeared to us that we were going parallel to the river, as Hammar asserted that the Chobe took a northward turn. But having made up his mind that the river was in that direction, and all the natives following him, he stuck obstinately to his course and went sullenly ahead, bringing us into a nice pickle; for instead of reaching the river in the time he expected, we found sand-belt after sand-belt in front of us that had to be crossed, each sand-belt covered with the usual bush and trees that prevented our getting a sufficient view ahead. At last, exasperated by Jan's stubbornness, about midday Hammar and I took the lead from him, and struck in a north-easterly direction, but without finding water. Our thirst became terrible; for walking in this exceptionally dry atmosphere, the evaporation from skins and lungs is disproportionately large and exhausts the constitution much more rapidly than in a moister climate. We had to kill some of the goats who, utterly exhausted by thirst, could go no further.

Pressing on, we at last were obliged to halt at sunset, after having marched without stopping all day, as many of the bearers, who were exhausted, remained far behind, and things began to look serious. We made a big fire, so that the stragglers

behind should receive encouragement from the smoke it made to come on, and then I went out towards a little depression visible on the left in the faint hope of finding water, and on approaching near saw the glimmer of a small pool, muddy and thick, it is true, but still water. A 'gentle cheer' that I gave soon brought the others up, the poor boys staggering under their loads, and then there was a rush pell mell for the pool, in which donkeys, goats, and niggers took an even part. One of the bushmen, Affrontür by name, distinguished himself by the quantities of the oozy liquid he drank. Lying on his belly, he sucked up the fluid with such vigour, that when he rose there was a marked difference in the circumference in his previously attenuated anatomy. We ourselves preferred to wait until the tea was boiled before risking a drink of this foul mess. Hastily sending water on the back track in calabashes to help the weaker boys along, we camped for the night, and felt more cheerful when the last of the bearers put in an appearance about nine o'clock. This day's march was the severest we had ever made.

That evening Franz related to us how poor French got lost from Selous' party.

French and Selous had been shooting elephants during the morning near the Mababe; and French, discontented with his bag, went off after a wounded bull, in spite of Selous's anxious warnings to be careful not to miss his way in this treacherous country. Accompanied by three boys, who carried a calabash of water, he took the trail, wandering away from the stream. The elephant, however, had travelled too far to be overtaken, and after French had drunk all the water in the calabash, and found it growing dark, he camped under a tree and set the grass alight, perhaps as a signal for those on the look-out for him. Selous, growing restless at the prolonged absence of his companion, climbed up a tree, from which he saw the grass fire in the distance, and immediately went off in the night with some boys carrying water and food to French's rescue. But when he got there he found only the bed of grass which French

had made to sleep on, and footmarks denoting his departure, evidently driven on by thirst. Arguing that it was a fruitless task to follow a flying man in the dark, Selous returned to camp and waited for tidings of French, as he got no answer to his signal-shots, fired in the hope that French was within hearing. Franz relates that next morning they distinctly heard a shot fired by French about three miles off; and, thinking that now so close to camp he was sure of his whereabouts, especially as good boys accompanied him, felt satisfied that he was coming home, and gave no answering signals. French, however, not arriving, towards afternoon they went to the spot where the shot came from in the morning, and found a dead giraffe, whose stomach French had cut out to allay his thirst by sucking the contents, usually very moist, and a good substitute for water in extremes. However, they could only see his tracks in the sand, and judge, by the enormous strides he had taken, that they indicated he had gone off in a great hurry 'past the camp.' After several days his boys arrived at camp, very emaciated, carrying his gun, with the news that he had died of thirst about four o'clock in the afternoon of the day he shot the giraffe. He had walked on and on, listening to no advice, and turning angrily on the boys when they told him he was going wrong; and even when he shot the giraffe, and they pointed out the direction of the camp, hoping he would listen to reason, he told them to hold their tongues. As soon as he had sucked the stomach fluid dry, he made off in a different direction, and they followed him in great tribulation, also suffering severely from thirst. At last he dropped, and blood came from his mouth. He took out his pocket-knife, and scratched something on the stock of his gun, which he told them to take to the white man at the camp, and also gave them his watch to take care of. They waited a short time by him, and then, turning over in the sand, they said, he died, after which they left him. They made for the river, which they reached utterly exhausted, and rested until they were strong enough to come to the camp. The watch they left with the corpse, because it frightened them

with its tick-tick. On the gun-stock was scratched a message to Selous that French was dying of thirst through no error of his boys, and that he begged Selous to sell his effects, and with the proceeds pay his servants their wages, and dismiss them when he got back to Mongwato.

Selous made several attempts to find the body, but failed to get any sign of it in the dreary sand-belts; and French's boys, who had got much bewildered in their devious wanderings, could not be sure of the spot where he died. Deeply moved at his companion's untimely death, Selous gave up the hunt and returned to Mongwato.

Jan Veyers also related how, when returning from an elephant hunt, several of his boys died of thirst, having taken the wrong road home, and missed the only pan of water on the line. The survivors threw away the ivory they carried, and came home, luckily having found a bush of red berries, that sustained them until they arrived at Panda Matenga. This was in October, the most trying and dreaded month of the year, when all the moisture had been sucked up from the soil by the scorching rays of the sun through a cloudless sky, and the early summer rains had not yet set in.

During the night several laughing hyænas disturbed us by their fiendish noise, so much resembling a human laugh with the merriment cut out of it. They were probably attracted by our goats and donkeys, as were some lions, whose muttered growls, occasionally bursting into roars, gave us good cause to keep the fires well alight till dawn of day.

Early next morning I discovered a large pan of water three miles ahead, to which we moved our camp, going no further that day, as it was Sunday.

The insatiable maws of our bearers requiring nourishment, I started off, taking three of my best boys with me, and went in search of game, and soon came upon an enormous herd of buffalo, who, getting our wind, were off into the bush-grown plains before I could get at them. Affrontür, the Hottentot, took up the track in front of me; while I, running behind him,

kept a sharp look-out for any stray bulls that might stay behind the troop, and was followed by the other two boys, Chiki, who carried the four-ounce gun, and Pikinini, the water-carrier, all of us going at a good run. Soon we came upon the tail of the troop, and, making a spurt with the four-bore, I dropped a cow at about sixty yards. Leaving her with a broken back, we increased our speed; and after about a mile, with a good spurt on, I espied across an open glade the tips of three buffalo bulls' horns glistening in the sun above a thicket where they were apparently waiting for us. Immediately signalling the boys, who had observed nothing, I stood out, expecting a charge. To my right was a clump of small straight trees about nine inches thick, and in front the open glade, forty yards across, with nothing but a few ant-heaps scattered about—poor shelter in case of necessity. As I expected, these were bulls who, tired of being hurried along, had remained behind the troop to try conclusions with their assailants, a buffalo custom well known to hunters, although previously I never had known of more than one buffalo taking up the offensive at a time. While waiting, one—a magnificent bull—stepped out towards me, pawing the earth, and digging his horns into the sand in true bovine fashion preparatory to charging. Pirouetting about, he exposed his shoulder, giving me an opportunity, although so fearfully winded as to make the shot unsteady, to drive a Martini-Henry bullet through his lungs, reserving the four-ouncer in case of a charge. The bullet went clean through and hit one of the other buffalo in the chest, causing him to sheer off some twenty yards to the right, where he remained looking at us with the stupid appearance peculiar to this class of animal, while the third buffalo cleared off altogether. Again the first buffalo, still dancing about and grunting viciously, gave me a chance to put two more Martini-Henry bullets through his lungs, causing him to wince at each shot, when he, apparently having had enough of it, turned and disappeared into the thicket. No. 2 had been slowly making up his mind meanwhile to come; for with tail distended and nose in the air, he literally pointed at us with his

paw, then with a low grunting moan he broke into a slow trot in our direction, increasing his speed as he came along. Hastily thrusting the four-ouncer in my hands, Chiki and the other two sprang for the trees, shouting to me to do likewise. Assuring myself, however, by a rapid glance that my other two antagonists had really gone, I waited till the bull was about seven yards from Chiki, who was frantically swarming up two of the small trees in the clump, just strong enough to bear his weight without bending, and then let go the four-ouncer at a moment when the buffalo's head was slightly on one side, exposing his throat and clavicle, for he was coming in a line nearly directly towards me, with Chiki between us. The bullet smashed his shoulder, raking him between the ribs and skin to the rump, where we afterwards cut it out. This brought my gentleman on to his nose, and before the smoke had cleared, throwing the big gun away, I grasped the Swinburne-Henry and rapidly crawled behind an ant-heap some five yards away; but, alas! the pouch at my belt, containing the cartridges, was open, and when I felt for one to reload I found they were strewn along the line of 'crawl,' so I lay still behind the ant-heap, with feet and head projecting into the buffalo's line of sight. He rose dazed from the shot and made for Chiki, who meanwhile was perched in his trees about six feet from the ground. Failing to reach Chiki, the bull looked round in my direction; but before he could quite make me out, the faithful Chiki, who was watching proceedings like a cat, lowered his foot and stamped on the buffalo's head to attract his attention, whereat the buffalo viciously struck at him with his horns; but by this time the alert Chiki had his foot out of the way, repeating the operation each time the buffalo looked in the direction where I lay, as still as a corpse, with empty gun and eyes half closed to avoid the buffalo's meeting my glance, watching with keen interest the development of the situation, not without a creepy sensation down my back that my friend No. 1 might return to take part in the proceedings. And still I dared not move or even wink; for had the buffalo realised that I was more than a

stump or log of wood, he certainly would have investigated more nearly what stuff I was made of. I was not much alarmed, however; for I felt that there was every chance of dodging him with his broken leg if he pressed me hard. After about five minutes of this by-play, the buffalo, apparently sickening from his wounds, went off towards the rear some thirty yards, when, hastily grabbing up some cartridges, I faced him in a sitting position as he turned to take in this new phase of affairs. It was not for long though; for as he gazed, a bullet from my long Swinburne-Henry, just between the horns, brought him to his knees before he rolled over on his side with the characteristic harsh groan these animals send out when giving up the ghost. To show the inefficiency of the Martini-Henry bullet for killing big game at short ranges, let me relate that after we had cut up this bull and the cow previously shot, and sent the meat home by the boys who followed us up from the camp on hearing the shooting, we found the first bull, with three shots through the lungs, still alive, though very weak, about a mile off. He was lying down, but as we approached him staggered to his knees to defend himself; however, he got no further, as I rushed up and shot him sideways in the brain, thus bagging three buffalo in one morning.

While cutting up the meat, my 'bête noire,' one of the huge Batokas, started a fiendish row; brandishing his knife and pushing every one aside who came in his way at the carcass, he started to cut off all the choice pieces. When reproved for this, he insolently started to whittle at a piece specially put aside for the white men's mess. I told him to leave this alone; and in an absolute frenzy, covered with buffalo gore, he rushed at the carcass again, knocking the other boys away like toys, defying me and all of us, and backed up by the cynical smiles of his three mates. I felt that unless something was done, my prestige amongst the boys would be lost, so I went up to him and shoved him away, when he raised both hands and spat at me in frenzied contempt. This was going altogether beyond bounds, so I felt obliged to strike him with my fist, and knocked

him over; he lay for some time without moving, much to the surprise of his companions, who grabbed their sticks and looked wickedly at me. Quietly taking up my gun, I told them to go on cutting up the meat, an order they complied with at once without further demur, considerably cowed by the altered position of affairs and the summary manner of their champion's treatment. Later, when he woke up, I packed him off with a heavy load of meat and told him to carry it home, which he did in dazed amazement, and now our difficulties were settled. My only regret is that this episode did not occur sooner on the expedition, for it appeared as if this lesson had a most salutary effect on the usual turbulent behaviour of some of the boys.

At night we heard the note of some peculiar small kind of owl. Beginning in a deep tone, it uttered a succession of short threatening notes, each one higher than the last, till reaching an agonising high shriek, it returned to the original deep tone by several sweeping notes, each lower than before, that filled the night air with mysterious sound, as if in warning of something dreadful to come.

On the way back from the buffalo hunt I shot a marabou that had some extremely light, beautiful, airy, white fluffy feathers under his longer tail feathers. I rescued these from the boys, who had stuck them in their woolly heads in most grotesque fashion, when I realised how beautiful they were.

Some boys we had sent on ahead to look for the river returned in the afternoon with the meat of a sable antelope Paul had shot, and the news that the flat banks of the Chobe, lying some five miles northward, were covered with water, a disagreeable outlook for our future tramp.

On Monday we reached the river at about eight o'clock, where Jan, grounding the butt of his gun in the sand, said, 'I go no further.' I looked at him curiously to see if there was any sign of wavering about him; but discovering none, asked him if he would at any rate remain here and await the return of our boys from Matambanja's. He assented, but in a manner not to be relied on; so hastily giving him some presents and cloth to trade

corn with on his return journey, we bade him farewell, and left him standing under a large tree, with his private boys ruefully looking after us as we hurried on to get the bearers away from the bad influence of Jan's example. They came along willingly enough; but from this very willingness, we divined that before long, at the next camping ground perhaps, there would be a general return of the bearers, over which we would have no control. Therefore we gathered our bodyguards more closely together, and with laughter and joke kept them in good humour, telling how they should yet laugh at Gaula and his men when they returned with the many presents we would give them. We made nine miles, crossing a three-foot deep creek on the way, before evening, passing many herds of game, and camped on the river banks, supping on a koodoo doe I killed.

Franz, who had accompanied Selous on his voyage of exploration up the Chobe river, asserted that where we had left Jan Veyers was the spot also where Selous had turned back. We failed however to identify the spot from Selous's works, as there is no mention made of the crossing between the two streams Okavango and Chobe. It is probable, however, that if Selous reached as far as the chief Moheni on the Chobe, Moheni may have later moved his camp or village some distance up stream, where we found him, and that then Selous's journey did not extend across the connecting stream.

Next morning, to our surprise, we found the boys still willing to go on, their object being to leave us at Moheni's, a little ahead, as we found out afterwards. We had hardly made three miles when we came upon many natives flying pell mell from the mainland into the reeds, and here the boys put their loads down and demanded the slips of paper that represented their payment. Anxious first to establish good fellowship with the inhabitants and make an impression of strength by our numbers, we kept the boys waiting till the following day. But the inhabitants, scared out of all reason by our appearance, would not approach nearer than some 300 yards off; and then, well hidden by the reeds, held a most excited palaver with our boys, pouring

forth volumes of execration at us during the intervals of conversation, that showed us it would be a most difficult task to convince them of our harmlessness. One fellow with a voice like a fog-horn kept bellowing forth rapid sentences, in which the word Amatabele struck us by its frequency, till we all laughed aloud at his fears, thereby only increasing their terror and the awkwardness of our position.

Next day we paid the boys off, as there was no help for it. Of course, we could have insisted on their seeing us to Matambanja's before paying, but we knew it was perfectly useless, as in any case they would return; and if, on the other hand, they went back unpaid, it would make things very awkward for Westbeech and the Fathers at Panda Matenga, for it was principally owing to their influence and kindness that the boys were induced to accompany us at all, and besides, would give a bad name to any other strange white men coming into the country who might require boys. We gave each boy, besides his pay, several articles that, now no one was left to carry them, we would have to abandon as of no further use to us, hoping by liberality to get one or two of the better natured boys to remain. All to no purpose. Off they went as soon as the last had got his things together; and as they went off, three of our ten reserve boys who were to get guns, waxing faint-hearted, started off after them. Hastily opening a packet of gaudy woollen blankets, the like of which they had never seen before, we distributed them amongst our remaining seven boys, and told them to shout out that every boy returning should have such another one as a gift. This induced the three truants to return, and also Paul, with five other boys, joined us, making the total sixteen, and as we did not hand over the blankets till the following day, we had them safe.

This point settled, and certain now that the worst was over, as the remaining sixteen boys dare not desert us for their own safety's sake, as they were too small a party to risk the journey home by themselves, we turned our attention again to the men in the reeds, some of whom had been curiously watching our

strange proceeding from an island about half a mile off. Loud and vociferous came the shouting from the invisible men in the reeds. They knew well enough that we were Matabele, and the terrible animals (our donkeys) that accompanied us, what were they for but to tear them to pieces if they came near us? White men indeed—where were the white men? The donkeys like quaggas indeed—hu! hu! bring them on the bank, and let the white men show their skins. Why, if they are white men, do they go covered? Let them see our boys handle the donkeys, hu, hu, yelah, yelalalala! Lies, lies—we spit, we spit! Driven to extremes, Hammar and I disrobed; and taking the faithful Jumbo, our biggest donkey, with us, we stood naked on the bank, caressing the animal to show how harmless a beast he was. Gaining a little confidence at last, some men in a canoe ventured to the edge of the reeds to inspect the unusual picture before them, when Jumbo, who evidently realised that he was an important factor in the proceedings, thought that it was time that he also should add his note of persuasions to the general clamour, and belched forth a preliminary roar to his usual hee-haw, that sent the boatmen nearly frantic with fright as they hastily retreated into the friendly cover of the silent reeds. Spite of the gravity of our position, we fairly shrieked with laughter at this unexpected termination of our efforts to make friends. Jumbo was sent off to graze in disgrace with his companions Sarah and Jack, and we gave it up for the day.

Early on the following morning we saw a great gathering of natives on the island before mentioned, and renewed the palaver, suggesting that they should send a canoe over to us, in which we would let one of our boys go to them to explain. With much caution at last the nose of a canoe came out of the reeds on our right into the space of open water before us, occupied by the man of stentorian lungs and another equally timid individual, evidently acting under orders from their chief. Telling the boys to sit without moving a muscle, so as not to scare the visitors away, I called for a volunteer, when Chiki immediately came forward and stood expectantly on the

brink unarmed, awaiting the approach of the canoe. But no nearer would they come than twenty yards from the shore, and Chiki, without any hesitation or fear from crocodiles or otherwise, swam out to the canoe and was hoisted on board. The laughter with which we greeted the sudden activity the paddlers displayed to get away from us, after Chiki was on board, broke the spell of fright they were labouring under, and they rowed off in the open, displaying many signs of growing confidence. Soon the two paddlers brought the canoe back, asking that a white man should go over; so, calling Franz, who by the way was not over willing, I begged that the canoe should be brought to the shore, that we might step in dry instead of swimming out, as our friends evidently hoped we would. With many misgivings expressed in their shining visages, they approached us yard by yard, prepared to back off at the least attempt we might make to seize the canoe. But as we sat still, evidently taking it as a matter of course that they should fetch us, the canoe slowly grounded, and without any flurry Franz and I took our seats. His dubious remark that a man can die but once, as he entered the canoe, convinced me that Franz had a weak spot somewhere near the heart. The natives, surprised into good nature at our readiness to go over unarmed, paddled us quietly over to the island, where we stepped ashore on the sandy beach.

CHAPTER X

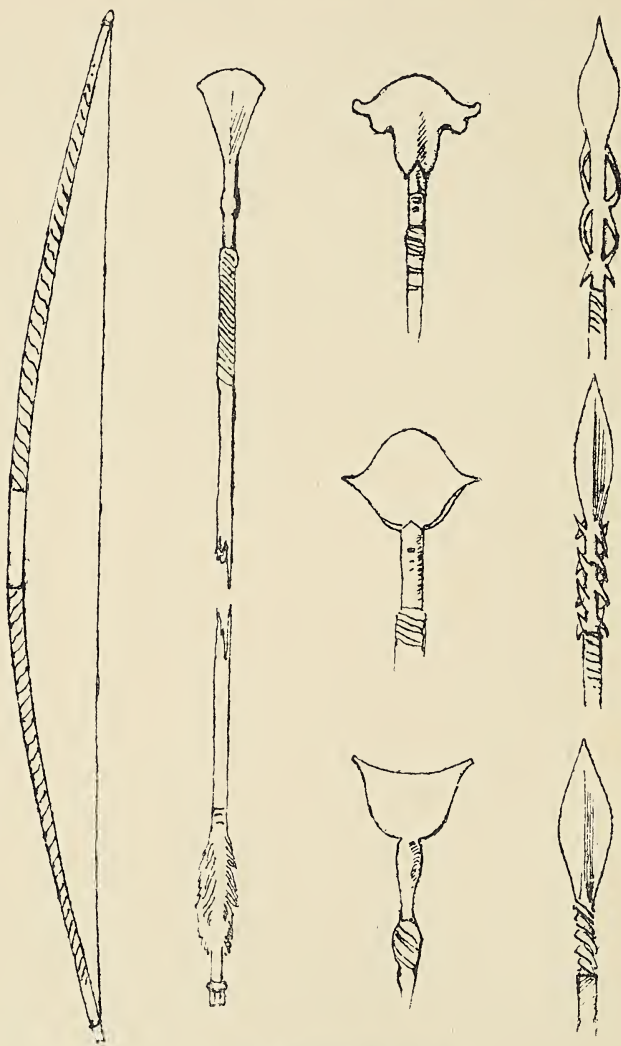
Moheni's men of great stature—Franz loses heart—Proceed up the Chobe—Natives bad shots in general—Native game-lore—The elephant and rhinoceros fight for peculiar privileges—Koodoo killed by lions—About lions—Lion hunt—First hills seen on the Chobe banks—Puff adder—About snakes and their poison—Wild fruit—Grand forest.

GREAT was the astonishment of the assembled natives, many of whom carried bows and arrows, at my unusual appearance; but they gave no sign except with their eyes, as it is contrary to their etiquette that any but the leading man should speak on formal occasions. We were guided to a circle of fifteen men, seated in silence, whom I greeted in an every day sort of way to make the position easy. After a proper silence, a grave-looking man of about fifty-five years, who turned out to be Moheni himself, chief of the Macheeayee, answered my 'Gitumetzi' by a similar greeting, slapping his enormous thighs with his right hand, in which part of the salutation all the assembled body joined. While this was going on I noticed that all the squatting figures were gifted with shin bones of unusual length. When Moheni requested me to be seated, I pointed to a tree, saying I would rather sit in the shade. At this they all rose in approval, and to my utter surprise I found that amongst the fifteen men I was the shortest but one in stature, and he proved



MOHENI

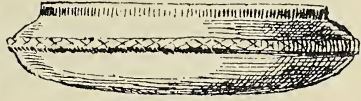
to be Moheni's youngest son. The shin bones were explained, and I may say without displaying too much conceit that it was



NATIVE WEAPONS, CHOBE

a most novel experience for me to be a small man in a crowd, as the six foot two inches I stand in my socks generally reverses the position in other society. When we were reseated, at a call

from Moheni, two buxom-looking girls each brought a large pot of beer and placed them before him, kneeling to taste the liquor in proof of its being sound—a custom prevailing amongst all the tribes of South Africa, and probably originating out of some occasion on which a chief was poisoned. I drank out of both pots as they were handed to me, the second after the first was empty, and passed them on to Franz, whose thirst apparently was not affected by the novelty of his position. Doing justice to his appreciation of this hospitality, and his capacity in the beer-drinking line in the same breath, Franz, a master of native manners, handed the pot back to me, and, after another pull, I passed it to Moheni, who, after satisfying his requirements, allowed it to circulate amongst his followers, the last man politely asking if I required any more before he finished it. The idea at this ceremony is to cement friendship, and that, through a nicely thought-out form of politeness, the visitor becomes the host, dispensing the beer to the donors, who assume the second place.



BEER-POT, CHOBE

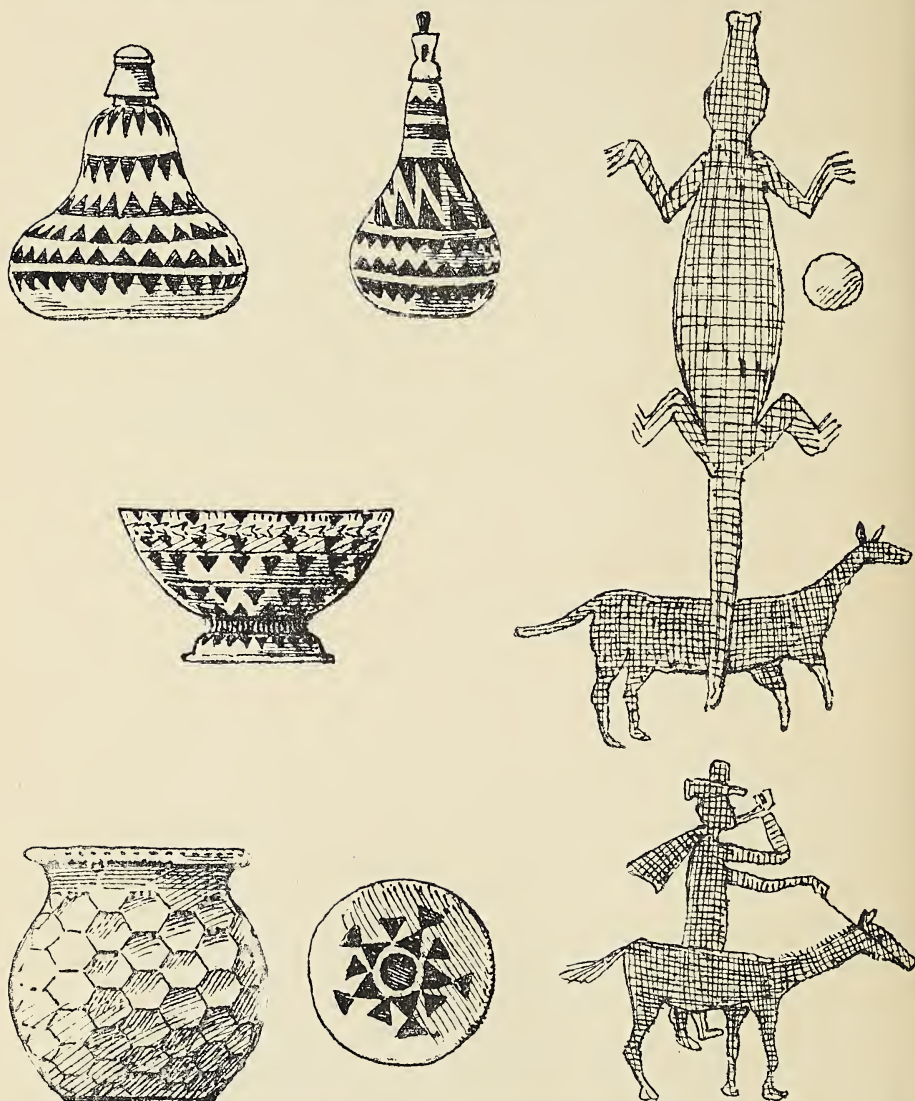
When confidence in us was established, I invited Moheni to visit our camp, and soon after I had returned he came over, begging that the donkeys should be kept at a distance. But on this score we soon allayed his fears by showing him how the boys jumped on their backs and rode about, and all ended in a laugh. It is easily understood how natives, knowing no larger domestic animal than goats, while thoroughly understanding the vice inherent in quaggas, the nearest approach to donkeys they had ever seen, should get the idea that these animals when trained for the purpose might be extremely dangerous. And when the really unusual bray of these beasts is cast in the scale against them the opinion does not seem altogether stupid.



MOHENI'S MAN

With Moheni came several of his giants, one man in particular exciting our admiration by his huge

proportions. He was almost seven feet high, with enormous chest and arms. To the natural attractions of his face, fitted



ORNAMENTED CALABASHES AND POTS, WITH FIGURES SCRATCHED ON THE SURFACE

with strongly prognathous jaws, he had added a dark reddish paint, with which he had also smeared his body. His hair was

done flat in corkscrew ringlets that hung down on both sides of his face. Altogether his appearance was grotesquely ferocious; but we, having experienced the kind of courage contained in this mass of humanity, treated him like a naughty child when he, after the usual manner of his tribe, commenced to beg for everything he could see. Likewise Moheni, now formality was dismissed, begged and begged till we were tired of him.

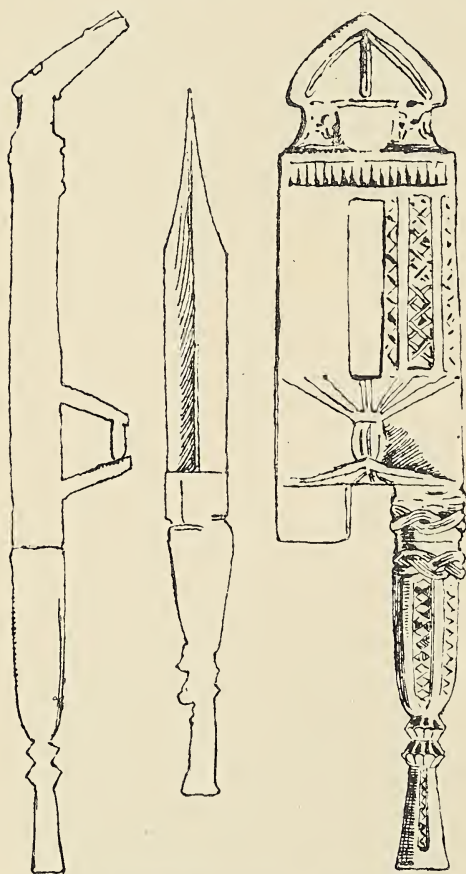
The desire for white men's things amongst these natives amounts to a morbid craving, likely to lead them to extremes if they felt safe in taking such measures. Our lives were one continued sustained effort of refusing demands made on us at one time after another for all and every single thing in our possession. We attributed this continued inconvenience to the pusillanimity of Franz, who, when told to give a stern reply to the importunities heaped upon us, made some evasive statement, which we of course could not understand, but which did not result in a bettering of the natives' behaviour. I am afraid that many of our difficulties were aggravated by Franz's unwillingness to speak out at the proper moment. On a trip like ours one wants a man of great courage, who should by his firmness of speech and behaviour be always on the verge of a quarrel with the natives, and when things have reached a certain pitch the master can interfere and restore peace by settling the difference. By this means one discovers how far it is really advisable to go with the natives, and by the exercise of a little tact can gain their goodwill and confidence, while the blame of a dispute is attributed to the interpreter, who, of course, cannot be made answerable for any responsibility. Franz was quite unfitted for such a post, but as we had no other to put in his place we had to make the best of it.

Moheni, after getting blankets, beads, and other etceteras out of us, far more than we intended to give, agreed to supply us with sufficient bearers to take us up the Chobe to Matambanja's. Canoes he would not let us have at any price, as it appeared to us that they were afraid we might take some unknown advantage if we had them.

At last, on the 25th of July, we made a start about midday, accompanied by Moheni's son, who was to return in charge of the new bearers. Affairs looked very promising as we saw the new burly bearers seize the packages and toss them lightly on to their shoulders. But alas! we were doomed to severe disappointment in our hopes of making a rapid journey, for these new boys, spite of their grand physique, were, owing to their mode of living—paddling constantly in canoes—weak in the

legs, and they uttered many complaints, and caused us a good deal of annoyance.

Our boys and ourselves were overjoyed at once more having corn to eat, which the natives now brought us freely from the islands in exchange for opaque red or white oval beads and thin brass wire, about a penny's worth of which obtained us nearly fifteen pounds of corn. The continued pure meat diet we had been obliged to consume for many days past made this corn quite a luxury, although we found it somewhat difficult to digest at first, as our stomachs were out of practice through long abstinence.



NATIVE KNIVES IN SHEATH OF WOOD, CHOE

We camped on a knoll in a flat from which the water had receded, and from this fact we gathered, much to our satis-

faction, that the Chobe was sinking. The river, too, was much narrower than below, hardly more than half a mile broad, though still covered with reeds. Here I killed a fine letzwee ram which was heading a small troop towards the reeds as we came up. He happened to halt about two hundred and fifty yards off, raising his graceful head into the air, and, stamping with his feet, seemed to object to the intrusion, when a bullet from the long gun laid him low. The new bearers were very much surprised at the accuracy of the shot, and declared their belief that it was an accident, for, while I was sighting at what to them appeared an impossible distance, they asked in contemptuous tones what it was I meant to do. A native is no shot anywhere at anything like a range. Perhaps there are occasional exceptions among the Basutos and Zulus, although I never yet have met a single one who understood the manipulation of the sights. In the Zulu war, for instance, the warriors always elevated the sights and shot over the top, believing that, because the bullets then travelled further, the elevated sight gave the charge more strength, never understanding that the resulting trajectory, which carried the bullets safe over our heads, had anything to do with it. But for this fact the battle of Ulundi would have had a far different termination. Three thousand regulars and volunteers, formed in hollow square, were exposed in the open for three-quarters of an hour to the incessant fire of over twenty thousand Zulus, and sustained only a loss of nine killed and seventy-two wounded. This is the reason that the Zulus are more formidable with the assegai than with guns, for with the former they always seek opportunities to make rushes from cover at short distances, or out of the darkness, to get into a hand-to-hand *mêlée*, whereas they believe themselves capable of conducting an attack in the open, and in daylight, when they have rifles in their hands.

There was much spoor of large game along our route, especially rhinoceros, which we came upon fresh every mile or two, with the two peculiar deep furrows this animal makes with his two fore paws when scratching over his droppings.

The natives relate, amongst their tales of game lore, that there was a long dispute between the elephant and the rhinoceros for this privilege, and as they could not agree, it was at last decided to settle the question by mortal combat between two picked champions. The fight was fierce and long, and for a time appeared to be in favour of the elephant, who thrashed his adversary unmercifully with his trunk, always facing him, so that the rhinoceros, who rushed fiercely with his horn at the elephant's chest, was pushed aside by his front legs and tusks, and therefore could not get a fair dig at his opponent. Both combatants screamed in their rage till the forest shook, and neither would yield; the fierce rhinoceros only growing fiercer from the terrible punishment the elephant inflicted upon him. At last the rhinoceros in his fury rushed madly past the elephant's front legs with a dodging movement, and buried his horn deeply in the belly of his opponent, who, mortally wounded, threw up his trunk and screamed in agony that for evermore the rhinoceros should alone have the sole right to defile the forest in the peculiar manner related, and then rolled over dead.

On the second day of our march we were overtaken by two men in a canoe, who were messengers from Moheni to apprise Matambanja of our advent. We gave them some meat and a present to Matambanja, consisting of a splendid blanket, some beads, and other trifles, to show our friendly feeling towards him. They told us that they would reach the chief in three days' paddling, but that it would take as many more days to accomplish the journey on foot.

We came across the carcase of a koodoo buck fresh killed by lions who had fled on our approach. It strikes a novice as very peculiar that, although constantly coming across evidences of lions in the Veldt, and while often being disturbed by their roaring at night, one seldom has the pleasure of a personal meeting in daylight. The most wary of game, gifted with a keen scent and marvellous instinct for hiding, the lion avoids meeting mankind by day, and, unless driven by hunger, will seldom approach him even at night. There are lions, however, who

through weakness and old age and consequent bluntness of teeth and claws are not able to kill game for themselves, or to hold their own with their fellows in fighting for their share of the meat killed otherwise, and therefore are obliged to seek sustenance from other sources. These will hunt tame dogs or any smaller easily killed game, and even become man-eaters if their lot is cast near country inhabited by human beings. It is always regarded as a warning to be on the look-out for such beasts if near a pan of water one finds the remains of tortoises devoured by lions, who only in extreme cases would resort to such mean vermin to sustain their existence. Naturally defenceless native women and children fall an easy prey to such animals, when they are digging for edible roots in the bush, an occupation we frequently found them employed in along the river banks.

A full grown young lion, on the other hand, kills large game with surprising neatness and despatch if once he can get a fair spring at the haunches. The favourite position is to insert the claws of his hind feet deep into the rump of an animal, his left front paw under the shoulder, and with his teeth fixed firmly transversely into the base of the neck to give a wrench at the horns or head of his prey with the other paw, which fractures the neck with a single effort so cleanly that the beast generally falls dead with its head beneath the shoulder. This feat, performed by a vigorous lion, hardly causes the spilling of a drop of blood, as I can testify to my cost, from more than once having had some of my cattle killed in this manner. There was not a tear on the bodies of these cattle, only the holes where the claws had been fixed in the rump and shoulder, and those made by the teeth in the neck perforating like shot holes right into the vertebrae. The sable antelope, and the Harris buck, however, he dares not attack from behind, for, with their backward sweeping horns, they are able to make things lively for any lion foolish enough to make the attempt. These, and hornless game such as the quagga, they seize in front by the nose, and drag down to destruction—while the oryx antelope, with his straight horns

capable of acting both behind and before, coupled to his heroic spirit, is the most formidable animal the lion can attack. Old Unkok, a native hunter who accompanied me in one of my earlier hunting trips, came home to camp one day in great excitement and related a lion-quagga hunt he had just witnessed. He was stalking to get within short range of a large troop of quagga, quite sure of being unobserved and unscented, as the wind was in the right quarter, yet the quaggas displayed an uneasiness that he was at a loss to account for, looking about from the short grass they were standing in to some bushes close by and stamping their feet. Suddenly they all fled down the wind, when from a thicket which they passed two lions sprang out and seized a quagga. One caught it by the nose, and the other, jumping on its back, lacerated the screaming animal fearfully until it fell under its burden, and when it was down they killed it by biting its neck. Old Unkok the hunter made up his mind to have that skin, and advanced on the lions with his gun in one hand, waving his hat with the other, and shouting to scare the lions away. They waited until he was within thirty yards of them, growling and trying to frighten him off with pretended rushes, and then moved off some thirty yards while he hurriedly skinned the quagga. All the time while he was at work skinning, the lions roared, and several times looked as if they would charge down on him, until, as he dragged the skin away, they rushed furiously at the meat, coming within ten yards of Unkok, who, while making good his retreat, was surprised to see three more lions, advancing from different directions, make for the quagga carcass.

This event led to an explanation of lions' tactics when hunting in troops. First marking a troop of game, the stronger members of the family take up advantageous positions below the wind, crawling unseen as near as possible in the direction the game is likely to fly, and when this is accomplished a sagacious old feline, stealthily taking a circuitous route, gets above the wind in a position likely to send the game in the desired direction immediately they scent him, thus driving the frightened herd

on to the ambushed lions, who spring on the game as it passes.

On one occasion while hunting I had managed to slay a lean old rhinoceros cow at the end of a land arm projecting into the reeds of the river, and in the hope of surprising lions feeding on the carcass I started early next morning ahead of the expedition for the spot, arriving there shortly after sunrise. On going cautiously to the neck of the arm of land, bounded by reeds on each side, at the end of which the rhinoceros lay, and eagerly looking round the clump of bushes I had selected as cover, I saw first a grey-throated old lioness standing on top of the carcass, with her head in the air, apparently suspicious that all was not right. Then as she saw me, and growling jumped down behind the carcass, the backs and tails of several others appeared for a moment. And now with every sense alert to catch them passing out of this *cul-de-sac*, I soon realised by the splashing of numerous feet in the swampy reeds, as the lions made for the mainland, that a large troop of these beasts had spent the night feeding on the rhinoceros.

Several attempted to come out on my side, but retreated, probably scenting me. Sure that they now would all pass on the opposite side only eighty yards off, I determined to have the pick of the crowd if only they would show themselves. Occasionally a dun-coloured 'something' shook the reeds while gliding past opposite, just affording a glimpse of its presence, but not enough to shoot at with accuracy, and I was beginning to despair of getting a shot, when a large black-maned male lion, apparently intent upon showing his fearlessness, came stalking along at the edge of the reeds. I fired for the middle of his neck, just where the vertebrae leave the shoulder; a deadly shot if successful. But whether the bullet was diverted from its course by a bit of grass, or whether the lion jumped forward as I pulled, is a mystery to me. All I know is that I was perfectly cool and held straight. Whichever way it came to pass, the bullet struck the lion in the loins, fracturing the backbone and completely paralysing his hind-legs. For a moment it seemed

as if a thunder-storm had suddenly broken loose, so tremendous were the roars he gave, and I, not knowing immediately what effect the shot had taken, got behind a tree to break a possible charge from the infuriated brute. The sound of the shot sent the rest of the family crashing away landwards through the reeds, while the deafening roars shook the dew from the foliage in the early morning air.

Feeling sure that only the wounded lion remained of the troop, as the crashing and rushing had ceased for some time, I nervously peered towards the spot from whence all the uproar came, and saw my gentleman squatting on his haunches with his two sturdy forelegs like pillars dug into the sand, howling, roaring, and grunting like one possessed, occasionally licking his wounds, and striking the ground sideways with his mighty forepaws, sending clouds of sand and grass into the air. Taking in the circumstances at a glance from his attitude as he occasionally dragged himself along without using his hind-legs, I cautiously showed myself, whereupon, with a succession of short grunts, he tried to make for me, but was only able to crawl a few feet forward. Again assuring myself that none of his tribe remained to guard him, I stepped nearer, and the angry brute made several futile attempts to charge, sending forth such hunter's music as thrilled my being with a ferocious feeling I cannot describe. Each time as he moved, he threw his wild-looking scalp in a cascade over his ears, and ducked his head with a menace boding no good to anything that might come within his reach. The unusual opportunity prompted me to observe the creature's movements with the curious fascination only apparent in our natures in the wildest moments, till at last an uncontrollable desire to kill surged through me like wine, and hastily raising my gun I fired three shots into him in rapid succession before he rolled over with a mighty groan, leaving me with mixed emotions at having slain this noble beast.

The yarn my two companions told of how the boys behind behaved when they heard the terrible roaring following the first shot was very amusing. They threw down their loads, and

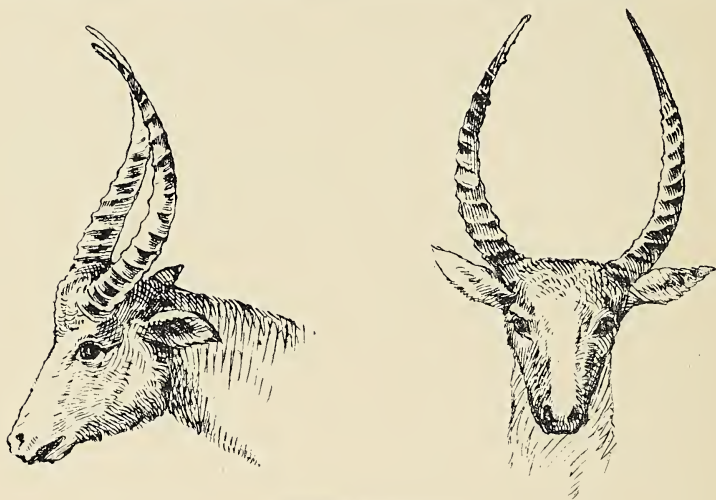
climbed into trees, declaring that the lion was eating me. Each time he roared they said, 'There goes the white man's head,' then, 'there goes his liver,' and so on until my anatomy hardly sufficed for their extravagant outpourings. Even my companions thought something serious had happened, for all they could make out was the first shot, then a long interval of roaring with apparently no sign of life from me, while they, too far off to come to my assistance, gloomily looked their worst fears into each other's eyes, until finally the sound of my three shots relieved them from the suspense they had endured.

Near Linyanti, Jan showed us the place where he had a great elephant hunt. He told us that he with his boys managed to drive a large herd of elephants into the floating and tangled masses of reeds, where they got stuck in the mud. He killed nine before they freed themselves from the tangled reeds and swam over the river to the other side. He got all those killed but one whose tusks were so heavy that their weight dragged the elephant's head deep down in the water and mud, leaving only his back protruding. Do what they would, they could not right the elephant's position so as to get at the tusks, for the water was deep there and the reeds sunk under the weight of the boys, as they tried to raise the elephant. He was therefore obliged to leave the magnificent tusks behind.

The configuration of the Chobe banks here is a regular chain of sandy hills, some one hundred and eighty feet high—appearing quite mountainous to us after our protracted march in the flat country, with valleys in between, forming short creeks up which the Chobe river sends offshoots of water that keep the reedy swampy vegetation lining the valleys alive. The general direction travelled was north-north-west. While ahead of the troop, some of us found that the new bearers had struck off away from the river, probably to cut off the creeks, so we hurried across to take up their track and found them waiting for us about seven and a half miles ahead under a large tree close to a reedy creek formed by a loop of running water from

the Chobe, coming out some distance ahead and joining the river again at the point where we rested. This country is *par excellence* the home of the rhinoceros, the whole belts being thick with their spoor.

A short distance onwards towards evening I saw two letzwee buck resting behind a bush, and, stalking up, shot first the one



LETZWEE BUCK-HEAD

and then the other, who stood looking at me in surprise about eighty yards off. One of the Macheeayee accompanying us made a splendid shot at a large puff adder, *vipera arietans*, with his barbed assegai. The beast had brought the leading bearers to a halt by puffing loudly, and while they were looking at her she wickedly kept sticking out her forked tongue till one of the number threw his spear and nailed the beast to the earth, when she was soon despatched with sticks. In the fangs, which, when measured, proved nearly an inch long, the clear yellow drops of poison were visible, moving backwards and forwards in the tube of the semi-transparent perforated teeth, as the equilibrium of the head was altered. The nature of these serpents is very sluggish, and they only bite when actually molested or trodden on by accident. But they also display an unwillingness to move

out of the way of anything advancing on them, especially if they feel certain of being observed. They then puff themselves up to nearly twice their natural circumference and wickedly wait for a chance to bite, while their little eyes gleam with ferocity, as if perfectly aware of the power lying in the venom nature has endowed them with. They strike backward from choice, throwing their whole muscular force into the bite, deeply imbedding their long fangs, and squirting out the fluid poison through their perforated fangs into the obstacle they strike.

The poison itself is the secretion of the parotid gland, situated in human beings below and in front of the ear, but fortunately in our case of innocuous quality. This poison in serpents, when the gland is excited, pours through a duct into a muscular bag encasing the fangs, and when the fangs, which at rest lie in a groove along the roof of the mouth, are erected and protruded for striking, the bag closes round each one of them separately, leaving the lower orifice of the canal, where it perforates the fang, free. As soon as the fang is inserted into the flesh the bags contract, squirting the poison out in little jets at each contraction, into the flesh or the bitten part. Without this forcing action of the bag, the mere insertion of a fang would not be sufficient to introduce much venom into a wound. It is no unusual occurrence for a fang to break off at its base during the bite, and remain in the wound; then its loss is supplemented in time by another fang, already formed in the mouth and lying simply attached by fibrous tissue to the roof of the mouth, from whence it descends to replace its missing forerunner. In fact, a minute examination will reveal more than one loose fang, each one smaller in size than the other, awaiting their turn to grow on to the bone fixed in the upper jaw—*os hamatum*—which supports the full-grown fang. This fact leads one to the natural inference that it is a frequent occurrence for an adder to require a new set of fangs.

The action of this viper's poison varies in intensity according to the circumstances under which the bite takes place. Given a healthy strong snake ready for the fray, and a hot day, on

which viperine vitality seems at maximum point, an unobstructed bite into bare flesh will certainly cause the death of a human being, unless remedies are immediately applied. On the other hand, a hurried snap at a passing object, made by a reptile probably suddenly awakened from sleep, or perhaps half torpid from cold, may only inflict a slight scratch, and thus inject a minimum of poison, which, however possibly serious in its results, will still have its intensity regulated by the more or less amount of venom injected at the moment, and also be more or less influenced by the vivacity or torpidity of the brute, according to the temperature and circumstances under which the bite takes place.

It is a well-known fact that serpents become inactive in cold weather to a certain degree, but that a marvellous activity is again displayed at temperatures varying between one and four degrees plus centigrade, or thirty-two to thirty-eight degrees Fahrenheit, when the beasts, in fear of freezing, suddenly leave their temporarily occupied shelter to seek deeper holes and corners in the ground that are not liable to a sinking of temperature below four degrees centigrade in their depths. Even when hibernating, snakes become very restless at this point of temperature, and will rush about to find some congenial habitation, where they can pass the winter more securely. At freezing point they expire most miserably of cold, although some recent experiments have proved that these reptiles have a small amount of animal warmth of their own, somewhere about half a degree, and are not purely cold-blooded animals, as hitherto believed.

Many remedies for snake-bite have been suggested, the first one, of sucking the wound immediately after the bite, being of most practical value. But care must be taken that the one who undertakes this delicate task has no wounds on his lips or mouth, or else he exposes himself to the possibility of absorbing some of the poison through this channel. This operation is best carried out by making a cross incision in the bite about as deep as the fang penetrated, and vigorously sucking the wound, care being taken that the whole substance thus taken up is

thoroughly expectorated, and the mouth cleansed before repeating the operation. Others suggest burning the bitten part, and if this can be effectually carried out at once, there is no reason why the poison should not be burnt out also. But this is a very painful expedient, liable to meet with strong opposition from the patient, before the result can be declared reliable, and also difficult to accomplish with the means usually at hand at the moment, for where a red-hot poker would effectually burn down an inch at the first application, the ordinary wooden fire-brand one is through circumstances compelled to use in the veldt is extinguished time after time before the result can be considered satisfactory. Hunters have been known to boldly cut the whole bitten part out with a circular sweep of a knife, and burn off gunpowder on the wound, declaring this treatment to answer well.

Of course, in any case, a strong ligature, applied tightly above the bitten limb to prevent the absorption of poison, is at all times advisable.

Several experiments I made on animals with the bite of European and Indian vipers showed that bites were cured 'without fail' by injecting liquid ammonia through a hypodermic syringe immediately on the bitten parts, into the separate marks of each fang. Alcohol, applied locally or internally as an antidote, proved perfectly useless, as did also caustic potash. But to the details of these experiments I must refer the interested reader to a pamphlet published as my dissertation while qualifying in medicine at Berlin in July 1881. From information gathered from time to time, I am convinced that the action of poison from different kinds of serpents is different in its pathological results, and therefore think this is a hint that separate remedies may be necessary as antidotes to the various bites. The repeated assertion coming from America, and now almost amounting to a joke, that whisky is an infallible remedy against rattlesnake—*crotalus*—bite, while in the case of vipers it was useless, may perhaps be taken as an argument in favour of this statement.

The symptoms of snake-bite are so often overwhelmed by those of fright that only the coarsest are reliable. Locally, two small irritated spots rapidly diffusing themselves into the tissues, with great stinging pain and acceleration of the heart-beat, amounting almost to palpitation of the heart, are the first. Later, the patient shows great lassitude with increased temperature, and small very frequent heart-beat, and a strong desire to sleep (which 'must be counteracted by stimulants' and 'enforced activity,' or 'the patient will never wake again'), and often, in cases of recovery, violent vomiting of dark coloured masses, or in cases of death, a succession of cramps affecting the whole body, but principally the neck and shoulders. A death occurring within two hours after the bite from a puff adder showed these symptoms. In cases tending to recovery, the bitten limbs become enormously swollen, and, on incisions being made, discharge a tenacious yellow clear serous fluid in great quantities, while in several spots on the limb circumscribed mortification of the skin sets in, leaving ghastly looking sloughing sores which take long to heal. But proper antiseptic treatment in two such cases I had finally led to recovery.

Altogether, it is best not to be bitten by a puff adder, *vipera arietans*, or otherwise; so, with apologies for the digression, let us wander up the Chobe again. At our camp on the 27th the boys hailed with delight some trees bearing a fruit not unlike a cherry, though oval in shape and of a more brick-red colour. Over-indulgence in these made Franz an invalid for the night. We, too, were much delighted with the magnificent open forest through which we passed on part of the day's journey. The trees were large in stem, and just far enough apart to mingle their wide crowns into a canopy excluding the sunlight, while there was no underwood to obstruct the march. It was very glorious to look at, and Hammar and I registered many promises to return here when we had time.

CHAPTER XI

Moheni's deception—Falsity of native chiefs—The way native kings rule—Rhinceros hunt—Too much meat—Best articles for trade—Hammar shoots six buck in a few minutes—A holiday—Shaky experience in a canoe—Chaffed by natives for our clumsiness.

NEXT day, after we had made eight miles in a north-north-east direction, at Kayakas' kraal opposite, on the Chobe, Moheni's men laid down the loads, saying they had orders from their chief to go no further, as this was their boundary line. The usual deception had been practised on us by Moheni, who never intended to see us as far as Matambanja's, but wished to get as many presents as possible out of us, and then calmly made his own arrangements, quite irrespective of what we desired, or what we were entitled to consider him liable for.

During all my wanderings in South Africa, numbering many years, this class of treatment has always been my lot from petty chiefs, and consequently I have learned to recognise their friendly advances as an indication that they wish, by peaceful means, to rob one of goods which, but for the fear they stand in of their superior chiefs or kings, they would take by force. But in such cases where they think themselves safe from the consequences, there is little doubt that they would adopt severer measures to obtain the goods, unless impressed by a show of possible armed opposition, likely to make it not worth their while to murder in order to rob more thoroughly. Therefore it is always wise to have at least fifteen to twenty well-armed and courageous men as escort when tramping the wilds, to let such chiefs understand that one is prepared to bite as well as bark. On the other hand, should the traveller be proceeding with the avowed intention of

visiting the king of a country, it is perfectly safe to laugh at the minor chiefs' demands, and even in cases of necessity, when short of bearers, to leave the superfluous goods in their charge, and simply go cheerfully on one's way. In dread of the accusation of misconduct or theft, these fellows will take the utmost pains to forward the things on; for, should anything go wrong, past experience has made them aware that the drastic measures taken by the king for offences of this sort usually terminate in the visit of a regiment of soldiers, with consequences they little care to take the risk of, as the orders generally are to 'give the kraal to the vultures,' only sparing the women and children, who are brought in as slaves to do the king's work. From this it will be gathered that outlying and distant chiefs are the most disagreeable to deal with, especially, in case of inquiry, if they can convince the king that it is owing to their treatment that the white traveller was compelled to go to the king's kraal, in spite of his intention to have passed through the country without first paying the king a visit, and thus giving him an opportunity of snapping up the lion's share of 'presents.' All goods coming into a country the king looks upon as more or less his own, and he will rarely allow anything to return or proceed beyond his boundaries, except the personal effects of a traveller, often even demanding the guns and ammunition, which one has a hard dispute to retain, under the plea that they are necessary to shoot food with. In justice to the kings, however, it must be stated that they generally load one up with ivory and other produce in return for the goods 'you have brought him,' and provide a friendly escort to see one out of the country—a fact intended to induce the visitor to return at some future date with more goods. The foregoing remarks apply to most savage kings in South Africa, but are modified, accordingly, by the degree of contact they have experienced with whites, who by introducing the system of barter, by permission of the king, have taught the natives to give a *quid pro quo* for goods they demand. Of course, in order to secure the right to trade—a right dependent on the king's goodwill—a magnificent present is

periodically made to his majesty; while those whites who come in solely to hunt, generally first gain his consent by giving him some adequate present, such as a gun or horse. Some whites, by long residence in the country, as in West-beech's case, become firmly established amongst the people, and then maintain independent positions not likely to be interfered with; for the king who receives annual presents of the coveted 'white man's goods' affords full protection to the trader as long as he behaves himself, and punishes severely any molestation offered by the natives to the white man, for whom it is no unusual thing for the king to form an attachment often amounting to sincere friendship.

The king's rule is conducted principally by influence, and murder of insubordinate rascals. Any chief arrogating to himself privileges customarily belonging to the king, often accorded him by sycophantic vassals, is mercilessly put out of the way for treasonable acts, as likely to endanger the safety of the throne. It is the desire of every loyal chief to have a daughter or two married to the king, or at least in the king's harem waiting to be married. Through these connections the king has a far-reaching influence, often even sending his wives to their homes, ostensibly on a visit, but really as spies, who, on their return, are supposed to detail every occurrence faithfully to their lord and master. And he, for the time being the most lovable and endearing husband, and having a considerable insight into human nature, possessed in a remarkable degree by these rulers, manages to worm out all information of importance to him. Woe to the girl who attempts to deceive him, for under the constant espionage of the other jealous wives, any stray word importing evil to the king's welfare, or any discrepancy between the statements she may make in conversation and her report to the king, will surely betray any conspiracy. The ensuing thorough investigation is safe to expose any double-dealing, and, according to the gravity of the situation, she is either sent home to her people as unworthy, or, what is more frequently the case, put to death, while the usual bloodthirsty regiment is secretly de-

spatched with the significant command 'to put things in order, if there is anything wrong.

Through this far-reaching and effective policy the king holds control over his subjects, who in one place or another are continually, under some plea of prior claim or legitimate right to the throne, and promises of aggrandisement to their supporters, attempting insurrection.

The introduction into these countries of firearms, which the king only distributes amongst his most loyal and tried followers, has done much to check the promiscuous rising of petty chiefs.

While walking through some bush on the river banks, we stumbled right on to a black rhinoceros, who jumped up from his lair a few yards off, and stood looking at us sideways. I promptly fired for his head, but in the hurry shot slightly high, so that the bullet perforated his skin and went through just over the top of his skull. The brute dashed off, with a shriek like a steam engine, through the thicket into an open glade lined by bush beyond, and I went after him as hard as I could go. On nearing the bush, the rising of some 'rhinoceros' (also known as 'tick') birds, with their shrill, peculiar shriek, warned me that the beast was near; and none too soon, for out he came with a tremendous snort. None of the boys had followed me, so I was alone. It is a most peculiar sensation to have a rhinoceros charge one in the open. The elastic bounds of the great black mass, with the horn at the executive end swaying from side to side as the head swings in unison with the movements of the rest of the animal, have anything but a reassuring effect. Lucky for me that I was in perfect training, as everything depended on my activity at the moment when the beast was so near that the next stride would have toppled me over. Holding my rifle in the right hand at full cock, I made a desperate side jump to the left, intentionally falling on my left hand, stretched out to support the fall; and as the huge lumbering mass passed on, I stuck out the rifle, firing with one hand full into his broadside, lodging the bullet well behind the shoulder. He went on, without turning, straight into the thicket, where I followed, loading as I ran. Hardly

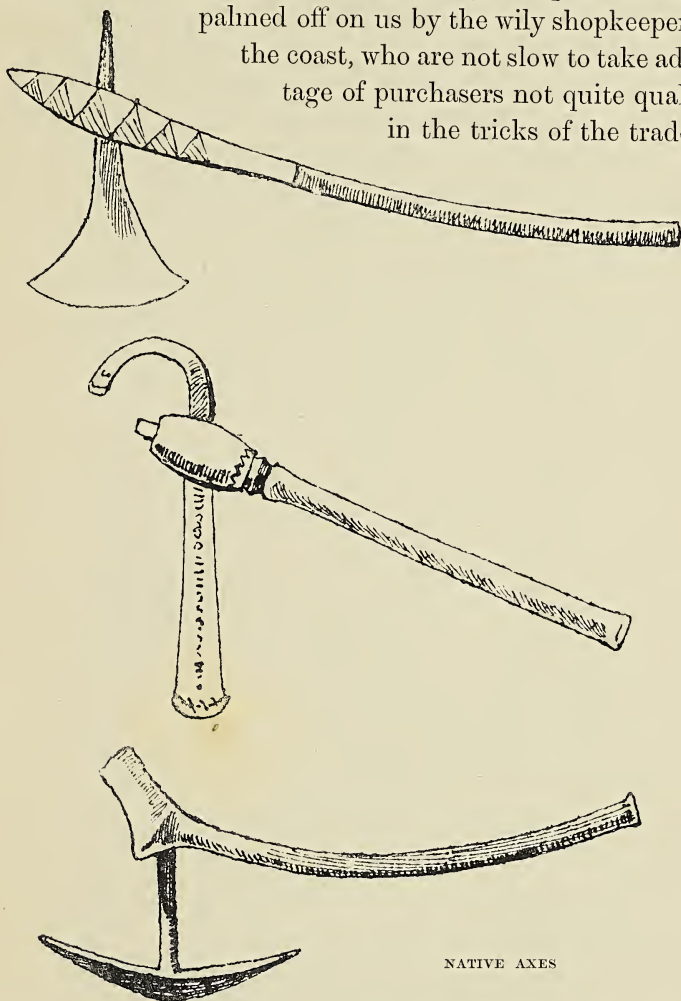
had I got within twenty yards of where he disappeared, when a tremendous crash in the bush warned me that the beast, evidently in waiting, had turned and was coming straight for me again. It was just a second before he appeared, bounding like a great indiarubber ball. Waiting as before, I threw myself sideways and rather forward this time, to anticipate a sweep of the horn the beast was preparing to make, while fetching his head over from the position the natural movement of his huge body had put it in. Again I let him have it behind the shoulder as he passed on into the thicket on the other side. It was a regular game of quartering across, for, as I went after him, out he came again; and now, much cooler, I felt as if having a great game with the beast for pretty high stakes, and, doing as before, landed him another bullet in the same place, and gave him one behind as he went into the bush. Once more he charged to get another pill, and then, weakening, remained stubbornly in the bush, where I had to go cautiously after him. He was standing wavering by a tree, with the blood pouring from his nose, and, as I fired, fled into the open, but came down with a great crash, stone dead, after going fifty yards. We found, on cutting him up, that none of the bullets he had received broadside from the Swinburne-Henry had gone clean through; they were all lodged under the skin, on the opposite side, slightly altered in shape by the pressure undergone in their passage through the carcass. The one in the head had gone clean out, and the one from behind had raked its way up into the fore part of the chest. It is surprising what an amount of lead these beasts will carry before compelled to give in.

There was great rejoicing in camp over the meat, and the babel at night from the natives induced us to shift our camp a hundred yards off to be out of the way. The scene, as viewed from our camp, presented quite a ghastly appearance, as the great quantities of red meat, hung up in strips to dry, covered many branches, reflecting the camp firelight with a sickening colour, not lessened by the occasional whiffs we got of burning

meat roasting in quantities on the embers, which heightened the growing surfeit we felt at this barbarous spectacle.

Lured by the prospects of meat, the natives from over the river paid us a friendly visit next day; and finding that we could obtain bearers amongst them to see us further on our journey, we discharged Moheni's boys, paying them with red (amakanda) beads and strips of cloth, which they wear as aprons. Here we also got rid of some long, angular green glass beads to them, which the natives had heretofore refused to accept as payment, always demanding red or white opaque beads of two sizes, large and small in preference. In fact, we soon found to our satisfaction that these green glass beads were highly prized here by the natives, for although they had never been seen in this country before, they, through some fashionable freak of the native mind, had been declared beautiful, and therefore were in great demand. I mention this episode so that other travellers may beware of taking beads of unusual shape or colour amongst the natives, as only those that are in trade in the district are recognised as currency, and one may offer many times the usual number of unknown beads in payment in place of recognised ones, and not have them accepted, while they will keep on asking for the particular kind of bead they are accustomed to. Thus we had to sacrifice for a mere song many articles and trinkets, such as brass chain belts, earrings, and various other gew-gaws we had brought from the coast with us as novelties likely to fascinate the native mind. They did not know the stuff, and would not accept it as currency of any particular value—a fact we regretted very much, as it was not without considerable trouble we had transported these now useless articles thus far; and our supply of the usual currency was limited. Some gaudy-looking axes we had also brought excited their unutterable contempt, as the edges broke in use against the extremely hard kinds of wood growing here, and while chopping through the bones of heavy game. They brought us their home-made weapons of soft iron, and with many exclamations of derision vaunted the superiority of their own

manufactures. The fact of the matter was that, in the hurry of departure, we had inferior and badly tempered material palmed off on us by the wily shopkeepers on the coast, who are not slow to take advantage of purchasers not quite qualified in the tricks of the trade.



NATIVE AXES

While waiting to organise our new bearers, we all went out hunting. I was on the track of a white rhinoceros some three miles south of camp, when thirteen shots, fired in rapid succession from that direction, caused me to hurry home in double quick time, with vague possibilities of attack from the natives crossing my mind as I ran along. I found the camp, however,

quite undisturbed, with the boys unconcernedly gorging on meat as usual. The shots proved to come from Hammar, who had gone out shooting up the river bank. He had come across a troop of letzwee buck, and by a scientific stalk had got within two hundred yards of them, when at his first shot, which told, the whole troop, impelled by some form of madness, charged down and raced round and round him at about a hundred yards distance. He fired away merrily at them until they recovered their senses and fled. As six lay on the spot after the scrimmage, he was satisfied not to follow the troop up to look for possible wounded ones, but, by a few well-directed shots, settled the account of those lying about him which appeared still to have a little life left. One letzwee buck, that he took for dead, jumped up and charged straight at him, and probably would have done him an injury with its sharp horns had he not killed it at short range as it came along. As it was, the buck, in falling, brushed against him.

Great was the delight of the local natives at this new supply of meat, and Hammar's prowess was lauded to the skies. This established between us a genial footing, tempered by considerable respect, which much facilitated our dealings with them. It is the native character to admire prowess of any sort, and men gifted with special qualities can always be sure of commanding their admiration. We ascribed the cheerful way in which these men came to terms with us to transport our goods on to Matambanja's to the good repute we stood in as hunters. On the 30th of July all our arrangements were complete for starting; but as the boys would not leave the meat behind, and there was too much to carry, we put a good face on matters and gave them a holiday. To one who has never witnessed savages devouring meat, it perhaps seems unusual to hear that they will sit by the fire boiling and roasting and eating and sleeping by turns, for many hours at a stretch, until their bodies assume a startling rotundity of contour that may well cause a disinterested onlooker to speculate as to what may happen when the limit is overstepped. Yet

I have never heard of any permanent ill effects resulting from this over-stuffing. Any traveller in Africa will corroborate this account, and also will bear witness to the fact that after such a feed the boys will travel hard for a couple of days or more without further food, and not complain of hunger. With them it is either a feast or a famine—usually more famine than feast, I am afraid—and accordingly they make up for lost time when the opportunity occurs.

While all this was going on, Hammar and I, influenced by the prevailing holiday spirit, got into a dug-out canoe on an open space in the river, to test its qualities as a navigating vehicle and our own qualifications as paddlers. Amid the united shouts of laughter from all the boys, who came to witness the attempt, we hesitatingly steered our course into deep water, sitting flat on the bottom board, in about two inches of dirty water, to keep the centre of gravity down, otherwise we should inevitably have turned the rickety affair over. Badly balanced, with the head low down in the water, it was a most difficult task to control our craft, which, influenced by the one and a half knot current of the Chobe, led us into all sorts of awkward situations, the more so as any attempt at quick or powerful movements set the canoe rocking so that we shipped water on both sides, to the further detriment of our nether garments. Hammar at the head, and I at the stern, kept shouting orders to each other, which neither the one nor the other was capable of executing, as we sat grinning in the most ghastly manner to make the boys believe we were quite at home and enjoying our trip in this rickety old catamaran. Now we paddled on one side and then on the other, falsely pretending to a dexterity in manipulating the paddle which neither of us possessed—for it was all a miserable sham, and at last, fairly beaten in our attempts to head round, we had to travel ignominiously backwards to the land, with an uncomfortable caution that only found relief when we finally bumped against the shore, and landed dripping wet from the quantity of water we had shipped. An outrigger supporting such a

canoe would make it rather a pleasant conveyance, or at any rate give it more stability; but the floating reeds choking the greater part of the river surface make the introduction of such a thing quite impossible. As soon as we were landed, two of our boys, entering into the fun, jumped into the canoe, and, standing upright, with vigorous strokes propelled themselves forward over the course we had been, bending low at each powerful stroke, and then mockingly throwing water from the end of their paddles into the streaming sunlight, to show the ease and security they are masters of in navigating this frail craft, and then, as they neared the shore, by humorously imitating our previous timorous movements, raised shouts of laughter, in which we all joined heartily. How we wished that we had been free from the tension of the instinct to go onward, always occupying our minds, and had felt at liberty to loiter here for an indefinite period, free of all anxiety and care, shooting, fishing, and otherwise enjoying ourselves in this glorious country.

Hammar passed the afternoon in sketching the buck heads and scenery, much to the delight of the natives, and I, while rummaging about arranging the packs, stumbled across Serpa Pinto's work, and showed his sketches to the natives, who were much interested in seeing the reproduction of things they knew. But a picture of a 'mokorro' (canoe) on the Upper Chobe sent them into wild delight.

CHAPTER XII

Recover our stolen goats—Overburdened with goods—Suspicious—Shoot enormous koodoo—Matambanja's a long way off—I am fearfully scared by baboons while hunting hippo in the moonlight—Creeks running inland from the river—Kill sable antelope—Sable antelope and lions—Jeluka's old drift—Shoot rooi buck in burning forest—Long-range shooting—Bearers lazy from overfeeding—Typical rhinoceros hunt—More meat—Peculiar insects—The Loengwe river.

MOHENI's son, who had remained with us to the last, bade us farewell next day (July the 31st), and we made a start, luckily arranging to keep the canoe, into which we put the superfluous loads, to be sent on by water.

Our course now was north-west, but as the river sends out several offshooting creeks between the sand hills, we had to keep some distance from the actual river bank, and traverse the abrupt sand-belts, here over a hundred feet high, between the valleys.

For the first time since starting, our goats went astray, and we were obliged to call a halt, after going seven and a half miles, to send out to look for them. Before us was a large open flat, occupied by round knolls covered with bushes, amongst which several troops of game were visible; and while we were waiting, Hammar went out and shot a letzwee buck—just enough meat to supply a supper. The flesh of this buck is very good eating, though somewhat dry; but the liver and intestines are infested by a flat, white, short worm, which makes the meal somewhat unappetising.

I proposed to go on ahead to Matambanja's alone to arrange the preliminaries for our further journey westward—for we were losing much valuable time travelling so slowly—and let Hammar come along with the goods afterwards. Hammar, however, over-

ruled this proposal, with a good deal of reason, saying that we ought to stick together in case of disturbances, and that we would be much safer in each other's company than if the expedition were split up.

We began to feel that we had brought too much stuff for comfortable transportation, and discussed the advisability of discarding several loads to facilitate the journey onward. To this I was adverse, until we had reached Matambanja's, hoping that by presenting him with many goods, we would gain his goodwill, and be allowed to proceed unmolested on our journey, lightened of all superfluous stuff. Besides, in case of disaster beyond, the goodwill of Matambanja would cover our retreat, and, in the worst event, should procure us canoes and men to see us as far back as to the Zambesi junction, where we could pay for this assistance with goods easily obtained from Westbeeche.

Next morning the boys came up with the goats, and we gathered, from some mysterious hints they dropped, that there was some reason for the loss, implying suspicion of theft or robbery by the chief we had just left. On examining the loads in the canoe, we also found the cargo broached and several things missing. Altogether, we decided to be more careful on the march, and put one of our own boys into the canoe to see to the safety of the goods, and then proceeded on our journey, keeping a sharp eye on the new bearers, who displayed great unwillingness to go on. Three miles ahead, the river took a bend westward, and continued in this course for seven miles, and then turned north-west by west. From the elevated banks on our side, we often saw hippopotami sporting in the river, and could also clearly distinguish the opposite shore, hardly a mile away, across the mass of reeds still clothing the Chobe. The islands in the river, now no longer graced by Kolahni palms, were clad with wild-looking large trees, probably of the fig kind, with many liana creepers descending in snake-like curves from their rugged, irregular branches to the ground. While poking about ahead of the column to find a path over a protruding creek, I came upon a large koodoo ram, standing with his magnificent

horns erect in the air looking at me from eighty yards distance, half sideways, as if making up his mind whether I was a thing to fly from or not. Without calculating the chances of the act, I levelled the Swinburne-Henry and broke his neck at the base with the shot. He fell with a grand crash, his horns scraping the bark off a sapling in their sweeping descent, and there he lay, the finest koodoo I have seen, with horns over four feet six inches long in a straight line. In a moment I realised that if the bearers came upon this 'bit of meat' it meant a halt for the rest of the day, so I hastily ran away, looking in another direction, as if after some fleeing game, to mislead the boys, several of whom came hurrying up in expectation of meat at the sound of the shot. We simply passed on and left him, and I may say that, even now, as I write it, I do not feel particularly elated over this event. Towards evening I shot a single letzwee, quite enough for the supper of the bearers, who, at the least occasion for feeding, made a halt and thus influenced the progress of our expedition by the insatiable capacity of their stomachs.

The ruling idea in our minds was to get as far as possible on our journey before the rainy season set in. Should we be caught by the rains while in the basin of South Africa, we knew that, if we were not actually compelled to come to a halt at one place, our progress would be much retarded, on nearing the west coast, by rising rivers overflowing their banks, which at present were either dry or could be easily forded, before the heavy rains set in; and that, worst of all, if caught by the rains before reaching the mountains westwards, we would be exposed to the malarial influence of fever in a much higher degree than during the dry weather season prevailing at present. And then, in case of illness, we would probably be compelled to stay at some place quite in the hands of savages, who had never seen a white man before, and who would only look upon such an arrival as a lucky dispensation of Providence in their favour to loot and rob the unhappy victims so opportunely left to their mercy. Therefore our anxiety increased at these protracted delays, and every day lost seemed like sinful waste of time. But the native mind is beyond

the comprehension of these facts, perhaps luckily so, for even if he understood the situation, it is probable that he would have placed more obstacles to interrupt our onward course. The river banks are flanked here by magnificent forest, which could be used as timber for all purposes requiring exceptionally hard and tough wood. White rhinoceros and buffalo spoor were very plentiful, mingled with the tracks of all kinds of smaller game. Any hunter could be sure of making an unrivalled bag here, for elephants also are plentiful, especially on the opposite side of the river. However, we were told that it is not permitted to shoot elephants there, as King Lebossi holds this part of his territory between the Chobe and Zambesi strictly as a preserve.

Matambanja's seemed to be still a great way off from us, and the length of our march, underestimated as it had been, was indefinitely drawn out by our slow progress.

In the night Franz woke me with the tidings that a hippo was grazing close to us in the moonlight. Taking Chiki and Paul—both armed with guns—with us, bearing in mind former experiences, we made for a thin strip of bush running down to the water, and crept cautiously along this until within a hundred yards of the hippo. There were still some forty yards of bush leading in his direction, but Franz and the natives would go no further, so taking the four-bore in one hand and the Swinburne in the other, I made with noiseless tread for the point of the bushes nearest the hippo. I could just distinguish the animal about sixty yards off, encased in a kind of haze, through which the moonlight occasionally penetrating, reflected the rays in silvery streaks, showing the beast to be still wet. I was standing holding the four-bore in hand, with the Swinburne-Henry between my knees, thinking of my last hunt after sea-cow in the moonlight, as much as the game before me at the moment, waiting for the hippo to stray within sighting range, when a tremendous disturbance around me and in the branches overhead, to the accompaniment of many fierce 'kwa-hoos,' sent the blood tingling through my veins. For the instant I

knew not what had happened, but immediately realised that I had crept into the centre of a resting-place of baboons, who, startled by my appearance in their midst, shouted their fierce cry in fear and terror as they fled, shaking the branches and trees in their course, as if a veritable tornado had suddenly seized the trees surrounding us. The hippo, of course, scuttled into the reeds, and I had the satisfaction of hearing the plump, lump, plump of his feet in the mud as he slowed off when feeling secure after gaining this retreat. What remarks I made on the spot concerning shooting sea-cow in the wilds at night, after this second fright, I think no one has a right to know, but I may inform the inquisitive reader that the resolve formed then and there to leave this pastime severely alone in the future has been faithfully adhered to ever since.

Crossing a long open flat next day with the usual creek running inwards, we waded through the fast receding water that left dank and decaying vegetation in its wake, and entered the sand belts, now no longer as prominent as heretofore. Here we came upon a troop of sable antelope that stood with their arched necks held high in the air, in the manner peculiar to these animals. There is little doubt that the sable is compelled to take up this attitude in consequence of the sharp, graceful curve backwards of the powerful horns, which brings the tips on to the back on the least attempt of the animal to stretch its neck forward, and the sharp points, when the buck is in rapid motion, would severely lacerate the skin, unless held up in the manner described. This enforced attitude imparts to the sable antelope a wide-awake appearance, fully borne out by its behaviour and courage in self-defence when attacked by lions. More than once have natives related to us that they have found the remains of a lion and a sable lying side by side, with the lion transfixed by the sharp horns of his prey.

As we contemplated making a halt hereabouts, I fired at a fine ram standing with his back towards me, raking him from end to end, so that he simply lay down as if preparing to sleep, first letting his knees down and then rolling over. A mile further on

we camped, having travelled seven miles, the last three nearly due west along the Chobe banks. We were informed by the natives that this was chief 'Jeluka's' old drift. Our accessory bearers here put down the loads, saying that they had orders to return from this place, but that the natives whom they would fetch from across the river were to carry our loads onward. Although we found the chief opposite was absent, the natives cheerfully consented to carry us forward, begging as a preliminary that we would shoot them some meat for their families. So, to keep our friendship warm, I went with seven boys into the sand belts in search of game. There was a large fire consuming the bush and thicket about two miles off on a belt, and towards this we went in hopes of finding big game fleeing from the fire. Close to camp I shot a letzwee, and on reaching the belt we found the fire raging in the foliage on top of the trees, here forming a fine open forest. The crackling and sharp intonation of breaking branches as they fell aflame on the clear open ground below, and the raging fire afforded a unique spectacle such as I had never before witnessed. A troop of rooi buck we found in this forest, apparently dazed by the fierce fire and burning branches falling around them, allowed me to quietly walk within easy shooting distance, where I squatted down, my favourite position for steady shooting, and dropped six buck with as many shots before the animals could collect their wits and make off. While we were cutting them up, preparatory to starting for home, a ram hard hit lying a little way off sprang up and hurried away on the tracks of his mates, and although two of the boys gave chase he got clear away, probably to die later, or to be pulled to pieces by jackals in the night if he survived till then.

On the way back to camp it was just growing dusk when the boys pointed out a troop of sassaby (bush hartebeest) grazing in the distance. Too lazy to stalk up to them I chanced a shot at six hundred yards, and during the ensuing dispute whether the shot had told or not, sent off a boy to look. He called out to us on reaching the spot, and when we got there we found a young

ewe lying dead with her neck broken by the Martini-Henry bullet.

When relating this killing of buck at long ranges to the uninitiated, I have often noticed a difficulty on the part of my hearers to credit such statements. Therefore let me try to explain as nearly as possible the conditions and facts of range shooting. Trained on the open flats in the Transvaal, a hunter by long experience will get at last to judge distance with a nicety quite astonishing.

Springbok or blesbok, the inhabitants of these flats—not over large marks to shoot at—will generally only permit the hunter to approach within two hundred and fifty yards, unless there are unusual facilities for cover in stalking. Opening fire at this distance the hunter may perhaps miss the first shot by miscalculating the distance, but the dust raised by the bullet instantly shows him where the error lay, and hastily rectifying any mistake, and allowing for the distance gained by the fleeing game from shot to shot, he lets drive several bullets in quick succession, always watching when the herd has run together in a bunch, and probably will give the last shot at about eight hundred yards. If he is at all accustomed to this kind of sport there will probably be two or three buck lying hit in the trail of the troop. It is a peculiarity of game on the flats that as they start running they spread out in their course, and then, as if seeking confidence by closer proximity, all huddle together, running with their sides touching for a second or two, and then spread out again. It is this moment of closer contact that the hunter selects for his bullet to strike the mob; therefore judging the time it takes the shot to travel the distance, the experienced hunter generally manages to drop his bullet to a nicety at the proper moment, and makes a hit. Often a smaller troop, of blesbok especially, will run in line one after the other; then there is no other difficulty than to fire well ahead into the retreating line to make a hit.

This constant wielding of the rifle and practical experience at estimating distance makes this hunter a very dangerous marks-

man even at the first shot, and I have known men to hit almost without fail such small game as springbok up to three hundred yards at the first attempt. The clear atmosphere and the short grass on the high veldt of course are most favourable to this class of shooting, for the buck has his whole body clearly exposed to the sight under these conditions.

There are facts related of the more famous shots amongst the Boers, men accustomed to this kind of shooting from early youth, that will find substantiation in the perforated heads of the poor soldiers led up to the attack during the Boer War at 'Laing's Nek' in broad daylight against this class of marksmen, who no sooner saw the soldiers coming up the rise than they shot them with bullets fired at over two hundred and fifty yards range, a fact reflecting everlasting discredit on him who ordered the attack, after previous experiences of a similar nature.

When entering the bush, veldt or 'low country,' as it is called, the hunter from the high flats is for the moment non-plussed by the altered conditions. He mostly overjudges the distance, misguided by a more humid atmosphere and the unaccustomed objects, such as bushes or trees, intervening between himself and the mark he shoots at, and is also puzzled by the class of game under his gun, which from its size often appears comparatively nearer than the usual smaller class of game he is accustomed to on the flats. A koodoo at three hundred yards naturally appears much larger than a springbok at that distance. Therefore it is not unusual to find that the change has for a time made a bad shot out of a good one. This deception does not last long, however, and the man from the high flats soon accommodates himself to the new sphere and then displays the superiority of his training as a shottist over that of one who has graduated solely by killing game in the bush veldt.

The man from the high veldt will soon kill game at ranges that his unsophisticated companion considers only fit for stalking. The Boers, well aware of these differences, during the late war put forward the men most accustomed to the dis-

trict and atmosphere in which the battles were fought. It can be taken as accepted that the average practised hunter considers a two hundred yard range a certainty, three hundred yards quite possible, four hundred yards dubious, five hundred yards shaky, and anything beyond as a chance hit at the first shot, but distances up to four hundred yards well within the scope of possible at game the size of a sassaby or wildebeest if nearer approach is impracticable.

To continue our story, there was great delight amongst the natives at the meat obtained, and we found no difficulty in effecting our start next morning, August 3rd. They preferred to transport our extra stuff by water in canoes; so, putting two of our boys as guards, we started them off, first paying our last bearers with strips of cotton cloth and the angular green glass beads before mentioned, which they accepted with many expressions of satisfaction. We made nine and a half miles in a north-west by west direction, passing several herds of hartebeest and letzwee that seemed to take little notice of us beyond moving off about two hundred yards. The tsetse fly were really fearful in numbers on this march, attacking the bearers, who were obliged to carry branches wherewith to switch them off their naked backs. Hammar and I were delighted to see some orreby buck, the first we had observed since leaving Natal, who, with their peculiar jerky double leaps, graceful withal, landing on the hindlegs from the first jump to make another spring, reminded us of far-off scenes. Our own boys were fearfully lazy from over-eating, but they never worried or troubled us now about returning, as we should only have laughed at them if they had, knowing that their safety now was inseparably connected with our presence. Still we felt reproved for giving them the opportunity of over-feeding.

We had made but three miles on August the 4th, when the new boys came up with the canoes and informed us that they must return, this being the end of their district. The headman, however, volunteered to remain with us until we were started again, and himself crossed over to the other side to call assist-

ance for us. It never was clear to us why the natives all lived on the other side of the Chobe, and I was anxious to cross over to see if there were any advantages of soil or other facilities to account for this fact. But to all my offers to go over, the natives always made some objection that ended in my remaining. Probably they felt safer from possible raids where they were, and with good reason, for no one could possibly have found his way across the labyrinthine passage through the interminable masses of reeds without a guide, or without attracting the notice of the inhabitants, who, thus warned, would have plenty of time to take steps for their protection.

The headman returned with the news that the chief was away to help ferry over the river a horse which had been sent to King Lebossi from the king at Lake Ngami, but where the ferry or horse was we could not learn, and both of us expressed our doubts about the possibility of bringing a horse safely through this fly-infested country. Our green beads were again accepted as payment by the canoe men without demur, and we also purchased a large basket of corn in exchange for enough beads to make a single bracelet. The country surrounding us was low and flat, supporting camel thorn—*Mimosa*, in which there was any quantity of giraffe and buffalo spoor.

While waiting for news from the other side *ennui* led me off on the track of a rhinoceros with several of my best boys to help find his lair. Apparently the rhinoceros comes to the river's bank to drink and wallow early in the morning, and then takes a bee-line for some feeding-place lying anywhere between three and six miles away in the sand belts. We proceeded without much attempt at caution, following the very distinct track leading straight through the sand for about four miles, when one of the trackers snapped his fingers to attract our attention. We all hurried over to him, while the boys assumed the wakefulness and keenness of pointers, and there sure enough was a sign that the animal had started feeding, for plainly all around us the tops of the small bushes had been cropped, as the animal had gone irregularly from one clump to another. He

might, as it was about eleven o'clock, be lying asleep anywhere in the neighbourhood, perhaps even on the back track, for near midday the rhino generally lies down to digest his breakfast; and if Mr. 'Tsekucurroo' (native for rhinoceros) got our scent before we came upon him, then good-bye to the day's sport, for he would be off. We all of us immediately made down wind several hundred yards, in a bunch, and then, spreading out in line, carefully quartered up the wind, eagerly looking out for the great dark hulk lying asleep behind some bush. Cautiously we came along, each one alert to the slightest sound or signal. To me it looked at last as if we were to have our trouble in vain, when suddenly Chiki on the extreme right gave a slight snap of the fingers and stood rigidly pointing to the foot of a large tree in front of him. Each passed the signal on, but I had clearly taken in the position at the first sound, and stooping low made my way over to Chiki, and by a circuit came up behind him. There, sure enough, lay the enormous hulk of a blue rhinoceros with his back towards us, fast asleep, his horn dangling loosely in the sand. There was no necessity for hurry or fear, but as I took the 4-bore from Chiki, also retaining the Swinburne-Henry for a possible second shot, my boys made off silently but quickly, losing no time in the performance, and I was left alone. I walked up to within fifteen yards while the brute lay quite still, then taking up a loose stick and holding the 4-bore in my left hand with the Swinburne-Henry fixed between my knees full cock to be handy, I flung the stick at the brute, bringing the four-pounder up at once, in readiness to shoot. The rhinoceros, disturbed in his slumbers, was rising slowly on to his knees when he caught sight of me, and had just braced himself for a more rapid effort, when I pulled. Dropping the big gun in the sand, I jumped clear of the smoke to see what was going on, and if necessary to avoid a charge; but for this there was no occasion, for the four-ounce bullet, driven in behind the shoulder by fourteen drams of powder had done its work: the rhino lay quivering in death agony, and with a last mighty kick or two surrendered his earthly being.

Not until I shouted did the boys appear, and then with hesitating steps. I never could understand the fear they had for this kind of game, for they seemed to be more terrified at what a 'Tsekucurroo' might do than at what I considered to be far more decided dangers from other kinds of game, such as buffalo. More meat, meat, always meat, and although perhaps justified in making a bag of rare game, I felt positively discouraged at the prospect before us, but made up my mind to give the meat nearly all away to the natives living across the river, and only keep a choice cut from the flank for our own camp.

As the chief Jeluka was away from home, we opened preliminary negotiations with his brother, who consented to supply us with the necessary canoes to take us to the crossing of a river ahead flowing into the Chobe from west and called the Liana, also Loengwe, pending Jeluka's approval on his return. We found that we were already camped at the bank of this Liana river, but the mass of reeds hid the fact from our observation until later, although we could clearly distinguish a stream about one hundred yards wide and very deep running from the west, which we at first mistook for an arm or loop of the Chobe.

Since we left the connecting stream between the Okovanga and the Chobe, the gigantic baobab trees, very frequent up to that point, seemed to have left us, with the Kolahni palm.

A thorn that some time previously had lodged in my foot began to be very troublesome, causing considerable inflammation and lameness, so that I prevailed on the unwilling Hammar to cut it out, an operation that gave me considerable relief, although distressing Hammar very much to perform.

At the junction of these two rivers we were astonished to observe the great variety of insects, especially of the mantis kind, of all shapes and colours. Some like broad dry leaves, others like sticks, and the most peculiar of all like grass seeds. Here was an inexhaustible field for the entomologist, and I am aware that many a collector will express disapproval at the apparent callousness with which we passed these rare objects without securing some specimens. But let it be borne in mind

that we were something like two thousand miles from the coast, with no appliances for collecting, and only vague possibilities of ever being able to transport such frail goods safely to the coast. Collecting requires time and opportunity. This must be left to those that come after us to fulfil.

While waiting for Jeluka's pleasure to visit us, Hammar crossed the Loengwe in a canoe, to have a shot at some letzwee buck visible opposite, and returned with two that fell to his gun. We found that besides the ordinary worm inhabiting the letzwee there were also many leeches which clung tenaciously to the mucous membrane of the stomach after the buck's death. Hammar also reported that what appeared to be mainland on the other side was only an island dividing the Loengwe into two branches, which flow into the Chobe under the ever-prevailing masses of floating reeds.

CHAPTER XIII

Paul recognises me as a youthful companion in Natal—Paul, the big gun, and the rhinoceros—Chief Jeluka appears in state—Native attempt to rob us of our goods on the Loengwe—Suspicious outlook—Decide to try for the Okovanga—The Whippoorwill—I go to Matambanja alone—My guide to Matambanja—Game wild—Shoot wild dog believing it to be a lion—Nearly shoot a woman by accident—Matambanja's son visits me.

ON the morning of the seventh, Paul came humbly begging that I would lend him the big gun to shoot a rhinoceros with, so that he too might relate his prowess when he returned to the land of his birth, Natal. After all these months' travelling together, last evening he had confided to me that many years ago he had come up shooting to the Zambesi with young 'Drake' from Pinetown in Natal, and that he had deserted his master near the Victoria falls, lured by the wiles and charms of a Batoka maiden who induced him to adopt her people and country as his future home. He admitted that he recognised me now and that he had known me as a boy when first I carried a gun, and called the natives together to hunt with me on our own farm in Natal situated hardly three miles from Drake's farm, and that he often earned a sixpence from me for taking part in these early hunts by carrying game home for me. He said the fact dawned on him when first he heard me speak Zulu or Matabele to one or two of the boys with us who understood that language, and when talking of my early hunts, one incident after another I related convinced him more and more of the fact, till last night, as he lay thinking the matter over in a vague way, the truth came over him like the awakening of a dream, and with a start he realised the truth that I was the same man. Last night his father had appeared to him in his sleep, and said, 'Paul, take care of this white man your

old friend whom you have found, and come home with him.' And now he said his heart was sore to get back to Natal.

All this told by the fireside at night affected me strangely, and if Paul was overjoyed to meet me, my delight was not less to have one about me who from his breed was innately an honest man besides being an old friend. Paul and I shook hands on the spot like men between whom words are insufficient to explain all that is uppermost in their minds.

Of course Paul got the gun, and Franz and I went with him and the boys to witness the fun. We tracked a cow and calf rhinoceros from the river about two miles inland, and, after quartering about in search of her near the feeding-place, discovered her standing in a thicket fast asleep, with the calf lying in a heap at her heels. All was conducted in the utmost silence and Paul instructed to crawl up to get a broadside shot. The boys all showed their respect for the beast by immediately retiring while we were making our arrangements. Franz took up a station fifteen yards away on the right and I on the left, while Paul, who was already seated in position, waited for the signal that we were ready and then levelled the big gun, foolishly or in his excitement holding the weapon somewhat loosely. A 4-bore is not a toy to be trifled with when properly loaded, and so he found to his cost, for as he fired, the gun recoiled, knocking him fairly over on to his back, jerking itself clean out of his grasp and falling some yards behind him. Whether he hit the rhinoceros or not never transpired, for with a scream doing justice to her enraged maternity, the cow charged straight at the smoke of the shot. But Paul, half dazed with the shock he had received, still had the presence of mind to crawl rapidly behind a scrubby little bush, and hide before the brute was on him. As it was, he only escaped by a few feet, for the enraged rhinoceros nearly trod on him in her furious passage. Waiting till she was clear of Paul, both Franz and I each gave her a Martini-Henry bullet half sideways from behind as she passed, at which she tossed her nose in the air and half halted for a moment as if she would turn. But the calf rushing past at this moment,

gave her a lead which she followed away into a nasty jungle, where we left her, none of the boys consenting to pursue her any further, and I not liking the job alone; for, accompanied as she was by a vicious calf, the two of them might make things lively for the attacking party, and probably interfere with any jumping or dodging tactics by a double charge. A rhinoceros calf weighing close upon five hundred pounds, with a reasoning power akin to a steam-engine let loose, is a factor worth considering under these circumstances.

Poor Paul was very crestfallen at the result of his hunt, and afterwards only needed reminding of the event to put on the most aggrieved look. He never could understand what happened with the big gun, and was more astonished than any one to find it lying behind him after the shot was fired. None of the boys ever wanted to borrow the 'Tobolo Ituna' (big gun) for hunting, after this.

On August the 8th, early, a messenger from Jeluka arrived bringing as a present a pot of crystallised honey, with the message that Jeluka was coming over. An hour later he came, accompanied by several subordinates, mostly old men of sleek appearance and large stature, denoting an appreciation of the good things in life. He approached us with great gravity, and when seated on one of our boxes placed handy for the purpose in a convenient spot, greeted us each separately, softly clapping his hands in salutation, a form of etiquette decorously followed by the whole assembly. One fat old gentleman, whose forefinger and thumb happened for the moment to be occupied by a pinch of snuff, vicariously used his ham with the free hand to comply with the slapping part of the salutation. Liaka, the headman who had accompanied us from the last place, then went up to Jeluka in a crouching position and extended his hand, which Jeluka seized and pulled at steadily for a few seconds, and then released it, upon which the ceremony of softly clapping hands was again put into force. Jeluka had his head adorned with a white, hard, felt bowler hat that had seen some service, supporting a beautiful white drooping ostrich

feather with a black tip; and otherwise was clothed in a ragged suit of light tweed which, judging from appearances, probably had reached him fourth hand from some hunter near Panda Matenga. Some of his followers wore hats made of thickly plaited straw after the model of Jeluka's bowler.

Before we opened negotiations, a tall graceful native arrived, clad in skins, who was introduced to us as Lebossi, which caused more clapping of hands and increased 'side' on the part of Jeluka. However, he appeared affable enough, although our own boys seemed to have reasons to doubt his *bona fides*, as they informed us later. As soon as we had made him some presents, he declared himself satisfied, and also thanked us for the meat we had sent him. He then ordered some canoe men to take us up the Liana river, to a crossing called Angombwe, which should bring us nearer to Matambanja's. After more clapping, and testing of balance by pulling instead of shaking hands in token of farewell, we made a start in a westerly direction up the right Liana bank. From what our boys told us, Jeluka was not entitled to all this formality, and even less to permit a man to crouch before him, which act is purely the king's prerogative. Jeluka, my friend, if a little bird should whisper to Lebossi your king of this attempted state, beware, beware! The guides accompanying us pretended to be at a loss to find the road, and led us about in various directions, in a way that made us suspicious of their intentions. Altogether a feeling was growing on us that the natives, spite of their friendly exterior, had something brewing below the surface that boded us no good. We had too many things and too few people to protect them, a fact exposing us to the cupidity of any chieftain imagining himself strong enough to take from us what we would not give. Annoyed at our guides, who evidently wished to lead us astray from the river, we took the lead ourselves, and after making eleven miles up stream saw across an open flat the men in the canoes off-loading our goods on the opposite side of the Liana, a part of the play not on our programme; so forming a camp on an elevated sand-belt about eight hundred

yards from the stream, and depositing our stuff, we sent our own boys to fetch the canoe loads to the camp. Chiki boldly swam the Liana—here about forty yards wide—and seized a canoe with the help of two of our other boys, and ferried the goods over to our side, while Jeluka's men looked on in discontented silence. I watched proceedings through a telescope, ready to assist with a few bullets in case any violent dispute arose; but the natives, evidently surprised at our confidence, remained passive until the loads were safely in camp, and then went sullenly away. One thing was quite plain to our minds: that Jeluka's men never expected us to arrive at the spot where they off-loaded the goods, and that it had never been intended that we should see them again. It was only by asserting ourselves and taking the lead up river, that we had overtaken the canoes thus opportunely; for it certainly was prearranged that we should be led out of the way by the guides, while they made off with the goods.

We now held a consultation regarding our future moves, as things began to look uncomfortable. Firstly, our progress by means of carriers gathered along the route was much too slow to fit in with our views, therefore it was necessary that some new plan should be formulated and put into execution: and secondly, we had reason to mistrust the natives, who treated us, the first white men that ever travelled these parts, in a manner that caused us to be suspicious of their intentions. There was now no further doubt in our minds that, but for the regard the natives had for our superior shooting, they would rob us without hesitation. It was therefore decided that a strong circular skerm should be made, with a door that could be fastened inside, out of which no marauder could snatch things away unobserved; and that I should go on alone with five of our boys to Matambanja's to see what kind of a fellow he was, and also to make arrangements for our further journey. We were both of opinion that as a good portion of the Chobe had now been surveyed, and we were only within reasonable distance of Serpa Pinto's crossing-place on his journey from

the west, it would be nothing unusual to connect the known points by dotted lines, from information as to the river's course given by the natives; and then to cross over the desert to the Okovanga from here. By following this less-known river to its sources, we hoped to gain information of more interest and value than by simply continuing along the Chobe. To carry out this idea we intended to follow the Liana to its watershed and then make our way as best we could to Debabe, the king of the Okovanga.

Westbeech had advised us to make for Debabes in case of difficulty, and assured us of a good reception at the hands of this king, who bore a wide-spread reputation for friendliness amongst the natives, although he knew of no white men who had actually visited him.

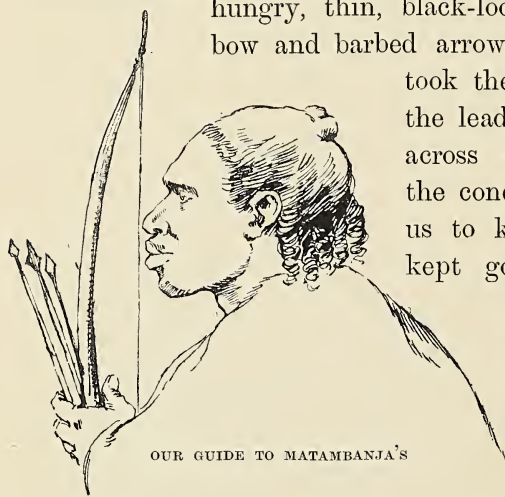
While the skerm was being built, our boys, seeing from the preparations in progress that we suspected the natives, began to clean up their spears, and generally put on an air of cheerful compliance with our arrangements that gave us great satisfaction. They also felt things were not right, but so far realised that we only had a mob of red men to deal with, whom a few well-directed shots would soon bring to an understanding of their position. At dusk the ever constant whippoorwill or goatsucker, *caprimulgus capensis*, called out his plaintive eight-syllabled note, while flitting with noiseless wing about our camp in chase of moths. To this bird is attached the stigma of theft by sucking the milk from goats at night, even amongst the natives of the interior; a fact leading one almost to believe the fable circulating against this bird's honourable character amongst the people of the Cape, but as far as I know never actually proved. The excessively wide opening beak, capable of accommodating a goat's teat, is perhaps the only recorded evidence that supports the groundless charge against the honesty of this maligned bird.

Hammar and I discussed a wild weird shriek we heard when near the river at dusk, not unlike a horse neighing in the distance; but could never attribute it to any known cause.

Long afterwards, I learned that this uncanny sound was caused by the rapid beat of the wings of snipe when towering.

The preparations for camp complete, I took two good blankets, a couple of bags of gunpowder, several bars of lead, and some cloth, beads, etc., as a preliminary present for Matambanja, and started on the 9th of August, crossing the Liana—here about forty yards wide and fourteen feet deep, running in a clear stream that showed the sandy bottom plainly—in a canoe, and went about a mile westwards towards the kraal of a small chief called Kankombé or Kikonto, to whom I had to give four pieces of cloth before he would provide me with a guide, or allow me to proceed to Matambanja's. The guide he gave led us for about a mile, and then, as if in terror, hastily bolted into the bush. I went back and scolded Kikonto roundly for supplying me with such an irresponsible leader, and got another man to show us the road. This fellow was a tall, hungry, thin, black-looking savage, armed with bow and barbed arrows, who unwillingly under-

took the job, but when he got the lead went off at a great pace across the sand-belts. Luckily, the condition we were in qualified us to keep up with him, for he kept going at a rate probably intended to exhaust us soon. I told the boys on no account to let this fellow slip away, a thing he tried once or twice to do; so we kept



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on his heels in spite of his efforts to get ahead, and before evening he slacked off a bit, but always managed to keep another boy between himself and my personality, as if in fear that direct contact with me would injure him. He was absolutely the wildest human being I ever met, and could not have shown more uneasiness in presence of a beast.

Chiki, with whom I had previously often tried conclusions on foot, was much delighted at the walk, declaring that this was the first fair opportunity he had had for making a trial, as on all previous occasions he had been handicapped by the day's work. We had a grand spin of ten miles through sand in a north-north-westerly direction, while the rest trotted, so great was the pace, yet neither of us gained a decided advantage. Here we came to a creek about two feet deep, which we crossed, and went on about another good mile to a small village. Our approach was so unexpected and sudden that we walked right into the midst of a circle of women and girls, peacefully nursing their children and cooking the evening meal, who no sooner recognised the presence of a white man, than they stampeded in all directions, screaming like a flock of startled birds. We had to await the arrival of the head man of the village, who was out hunting, before permission was given us to camp for the fast approaching night. Our supper was very simple, consisting of some wild mabula fruit we had hastily gathered *en route*.

The greater part of the day's march took us through a magnificent open forest of large trees, with no underwood to hamper our progress. There was much game spoor, as usual, and once we came upon an old rhinoceros mooning along between the trees, apparently half asleep, for he allowed us to approach within eighty yards before realising our presence; and then, awake to the situation, went off with peculiar, elastic, long-reaching bounds that took him over the ground at a surprising speed. I did not hunt along the road, hoping that luck would favour me by bringing game within reach towards evening, but in this I was disappointed.

On bidding farewell to our hosts of the night, on the following morning, an old dame asked me for some large white beads to make the counterpart of a necklace she already wore. It was with evident signs of grief that she said good-bye when I told her that I had no beads, and therefore could not comply with her request. Not even the piece of cloth given her seemed to cheer her for the loss of what she had evidently been making

up her mind all night to have. After going two miles further, the guide, suddenly emerging from the bush, brought us to the mass of reeds, as usual here, covering the Chobe, and, pointing with a lean long finger across the solemn reeds, uttered the one word 'Matambanja'; then turning without further notice of us, or word of explanation, glided bending through the bush like a spectre. So sudden was his departure that he was gone before I had time to hand him the strip of cloth intended as payment for his services. I even half expected to receive an arrow out of the bush, as a parting compliment from this wild-looking specimen, who evidently was relieved to be out of sight of my uncanny appearance. As we had been depending on the gun to supply us with food, and so far had shot nothing, we were glad to breakfast on mabula fruit growing wild in the neighbourhood of our camping-ground. I intended as soon as we had been able to make the natives on the other side aware of our presence, to go out shooting, and we were just in the act of lighting a large fire whose smoke should serve as a signal to Matambanja that travellers had arrived at the drift, when two men in a canoe emerged from the reeds, who were immediately engaged to take my message over to him, and also to ask for corn to eat. Expecting that it would take about two hours before the messengers returned from the chief, I went out alone to look for game, making a circuit occupying about that time, while the boys had orders to await any arrivals from over the way. The only buck I saw were some koodoo, so excessively wild that they would not allow me to get within reasonable range. This wildness indicated some unusual circumstance prevailing in the neighbourhood, which became apparent later. On returning from my walk, and finding that there was no news from over the way, I determined to have another trial at the koodoo, or whatever else might come in the way, and went out in the direction where they last had shown themselves. Before long, I crossed my former track, and was unpleasantly surprised to find the plain footmarks of a large lion that had dogged my steps while out in the morning. I followed along the track,

curious to know how far the beast had been after me, and was going along easily, just watching for possibilities, when a short, sharp, barking grunt behind me made me face round in double quick time. About eighty yards back was a thicket, between which and myself a few scattered trees intervened, while the intermediate sandy soil was almost bare of grass. Going a little closer, peering into the bush the while, I made out two round, yellow ears and the face of some beast—evidently a lion—looking at me attentively through the scrub at the edge of the thicket. Judging that a shot aimed below the face would rake the beast from end to end, as he was evidently standing facing me, and feeling secure of my aim at that distance, I had no doubts about the result of the shot, so, carefully sticking out the long Swinburne-Henry, I pulled. Not a sound came from the bush, or the least move indicating a struggle in response to the shot, so, as I had reloaded with great speed to be prepared for eventualities, I had time to look about me, but could distinguish nothing—all being obscured in the bush. Not quite trusting the silence, I advanced carefully to the spot, halting every few yards and looking into the thicket, and when near enough, hurled a dead branch into the bush ; still no sign of life, so I walked up, and found the most beautiful black and tan yellow wild dog one could wish to see, dead, with the whole of his intestines and liver lying by his side. He had evidently been following the lion in hopes of offal. The bullet had struck on the clavicle and first rib, and expanding, had cut open the whole carcass down his right side, as the stroke of a sharp knife might have done.

It was a tremendous take-in. I was as sure that it was a lion as of my own existence, and involuntarily thought somehow I had been juggled out of my legitimate game. The wildness of the koodoo and scarcity of other game in the immediate neighbourhood was explained. Where one wild dog is, there is usually a troop, and these persevering animals had been scouring the neighbourhood, scaring the wits out of everything susceptible to their teeth. A nice look-out for our pots.

Much discouraged, I went on several miles up the river, hoping to get beyond the sphere of the wild dogs, and at last came on the track of a single old buffalo bull which I followed into a dense thicket, and was just on the point of giving up the track owing to the danger of going in pursuit of such game into thick places, when I heard a scraping and stamping, about a hundred yards off. This commotion led me to believe that the bull was venting his superfluous spleen, as single old buffalo often do when driven out of a herd, by rampaging about in the bush, goring at trees and pawing the earth. Throwing myself on hands and knees to be unobserved, I brought all my bushcraft to bear on a scientific and careful stalk, pushing the twigs and leaves aside before leaning my weight on the spot thus covered, so as to make as little noise as possible. The buffalo seemed to be quite unaware of any danger as I came nearer, and at last I could see the base of his grizzly-looking horn as he pounded up and down. It was not a clear shot, and I desisted from shooting several times while taking sight for a spot below the horn where the brain should be, but somehow failed to pull, as the good old rule occurred to me never to fire until quite sure of your shot. At last I decided to crawl a little on one side to get a better view, and then saw to my utter horror, that what I had been watching as the horn of a buffalo bull was the grizzly head of an old native woman digging edible roots with a hoe in the bush. I fairly shook with terror at the certain consequences of the shot had I fired when sighting, and thanked Providence for staying my finger from pulling the trigger. Imagine the horror one would experience at finding the gory corpse of an old woman shot inopportunately in the forest; for there is no doubt that the bullet would have broken her neck fired the way I was aiming. If anything could have haunted me in after life the sight of that corpse would have done so. Even as I write a cold shudder runs through me at the recollection.

The old woman collapsed in sheer fright at seeing me, and although I spoke kindly to her, my sudden appearance as I rose

from the earth so dazed the old girl, that she just sat there and grinned with terror until I left her.

It was rather a poor day's sport taken altogether, so I returned to camp about midday to find that Matambanja had sent his son over with a bag of corn and a message to say he would honour me with a visit early next morning. Matambanja's son was clad in a situtunga's skin brayed as soft as silk. It was of dark colour, reddish brown with a shot of grey in it, and the thin hair was long and soft, half-way between wool and goat hair in texture.

Towards evening the cackling of guinea-fowl in the neighbourhood aroused my rebuffed instincts, and I went out and shot six with the rifle, enough for a good meal all round.

CHAPTER XIV

Matambanja arrives with beer—Return to Liana river—Donkeys suffer and die from tsetse fly-bite—Mistake large lion for wildebeest—Lion hunt—Hammar makes a successful long shot—Matambanja arrives at our camp, and behaves badly—Our difficulties—How to travel these regions—Sakoonima arrives—He advises us to fly—Chief Kikonto tries to murder Franz—We fire to protect him—We burn our superfluous goods, and make for the sand-belts heavily laden—We find a Mosaro woman who directs us to water—The Mosaros are afraid of us—About the Mosaros.

NEXT morning, August the 11th, at about 8 A.M., Matambanja appeared from out of the reeds in a canoe, bringing two welcome pots of beer and a calabash of crystallised honey as a present. Our greeting was quite informal, although he is a big chief, and he quietly sat down to listen to a recital of my woes and wants. He said he was much angered that we should be treated so shabbily by natives in his district, expressed his willingness to assist us in every manner required, and said he would see that white men in future should not be troubled as we had been. He arranged to pay us a visit in our camp at Kikonto's, the next day but one, and promised to bring guides and bearers to escort us on the further journey. He expressed the greatest admiration for breech-loading guns, and spoke much of his friendship for white men and their goods, and told me to go back with my 'heart white' from gladness because he now was our friend. Two wagons with many goods had passed through his country, he said, and he and the whites with the wagons were the greatest friends. This was a very apparent lie, from the fact of there being no roads, and tsetse fly sufficient to have killed any quantity of oxen. After receiving his presents he gave me a pair of very inferior situtunga horns and departed.

Matambanja was a man about fifty years of age, rather above the middle height, with broad shoulders, and a mouth that did not at any rate belie itself by the large draughts of beer it took in. His skin was lighter in colour than the ordinary native's, of a yellowish tint; and his bearing that of one accustomed to command. Altogether a superior class of native, with a go-ahead and no-nonsense sort of manner about him. Whether to attribute our subsequent difficulties directly to him, we know not; but the fact remains that he certainly never kept one of his promises, or helped us in any way, but remained at best neutral, during the events that harassed us afterwards.



MATAMBANJA

The beads he wore round his neck were of light blue tints, disposed with a nicety that distinctly displayed an appreciation of the finer shades of colour and the arrangement of various patterns. His men also wore necklaces of beads, flat white—the first I had seen—with red and blue mixed, and interspersed with bits of reed cut into proper shape to eke out the length, while several very small dark buck-horns served as pendants dangling on the chest in front—altogether a very pretty ornament.

We breakfasted after the chief had left, and walked back to camp on the Liana river without further adventure. Hammar came down to the drift to meet us as soon as he espied us at the bank, and reported 'all right, except that old Sarah, one of the donkeys, had died from fly-bite, and that the other two were almost unable to walk from stiffness brought about by the same cause. The natives had not been near him, nor attempted to molest the camp in any manner whatever. Old Nana, our white goat, had given birth to a beautiful snow-white kid, which

we christened 'Blanche' with much formality. Each one of the expedition formed an attachment for this little thing, that made it a matter of honour to carry her by turns later on the march, until she was strong enough to hold her own. The charming little creature caused us much diversion, and also a good deal of anxiety from her wild freaks, sometimes unobserved climbing up old leaning stumps or trees, and then by her plaintive little bleats calling for assistance to relieve her from the perilous position she had got into. To test the sincerity of the feelings of our boys for this little thing, I several times suggested that it would be far easier to kill it at once, than have all this bother; but at the first word to this purport, Chiki or one of the other boys would snatch it up, and run out of harm's way with it in his arms, thereby plainly showing that they had found a soft place in their rough hearts for the little tender animal. If anything was wrong with Blanche, the whole camp was in uproar until she was safe again. I mention this little incident specially to illustrate that these natives are capable of the most generous feelings, and emphasise the fact that, spite of the heavy loads they carried, there was always a rush at starting for the honour of adding the weight of little Blanche to their burdens for the day.

Hammar had shot sufficient meat for the camp during my absence, but as the supply was running short I went next day on the back-track down the Liana river, where on the way up we had fired several shots at some Harris buck at long ranges, probably wounding some. This presumption proved correct, for as I neared the spot, we were delighted to see many aasvogels (vultures) seated in a tree near a thicket, a sure indication that there was 'something' feeding on a carcase on the ground that kept them at a respectful distance, probably nothing less than lions. Unfortunately the wind was wrong, and before we reached the spot and got sight of a dead Harris buck over half consumed, the lions had skulked away. Judging, however, that there must be more than this one dead buck in the neighbourhood, wounded by our bullets, and subsequently torn down by

lions, because otherwise the lions would have finished this single buck at a meal, we searched around for signs of other aasvogels sitting on trees within range of sight. While looking about, there appeared, about six hundred yards off down the valley, what seemed at first sight to be a blue wildebeest. I immediately started to stalk down on the beast, but before I had gone three hundred yards recognised that my blue wildebeest was a large, full-maned, black lion, who trotted off to a thick bush lower down: this mistake was pardonable, for the lion much resembled the appearance of a wildebeest at long range. I gave chase at a smart run, but could not get within decent range before he disappeared. While running, however, two lionesses that I had passed started up behind me from their lair in the long grass, and made off sulkily at a trot down the valley, amongst some scattered little bushes where only short grass was growing. As soon as they reached the bushes they broke into a slow, heavy walk, not likely to take them far, which I no sooner realised, than, putting on a good spurt and keeping in cover behind some larger bushes, I came out about eighty yards from a lioness that was standing gorged with meat, just displaying her body, while the head was hidden, held low behind a little bush. Much out of breath as I was, making the shooting unsteady, I still put out the long Swinburne-Henry, and pulled for the neck. The bullet went in on the shoulder and rolled her over for a moment. She rose immediately, giving a scratch with both paws, one after the other, that sent sand and grass flying into the air; then, as she saw me, with a hasty move pulling herself together, she went bounding off into a thicket on the right. I was just going to let her have another bullet when, looking to the left, I saw another lioness, with head erect and very wide awake, watching my movements, but before I could get a shot she also bounded into a thicket close by on that side. The first lioness now set up a roaring in the bush, which I judged, from its lessening strength, meant that she was weakening. I yelled for my boys—who had during these proceedings remained at a safe distance—to help me look around,

for I felt sure there was a nest of lions here, and I could not properly take in the whole view at one glance. If I had only had a double eight or ten-bore, a weapon that kills on the spot at short ranges, things would have been different, but the Swinburne-Henry is not a dead stopper at close quarters; so I remained waiting until the boys reached me, and then made a cautious circuit of the bushes to look for possible lions still in hiding. The hit lioness meanwhile was still roaring, though much more faintly. My move came too late, for all the troop had gone, leaving only their tracks: the carcass of a second decaying Harris buck we found about fifty yards from the edge of the thicket on the left. The lioness on the right, now only about two hundred yards off, uttered gurgling growls, which soon ceased altogether.

Scolding the boys for not having stuck to me in the first instance, and making a row to induce them to go into the bush, we tracked the first lioness carefully to the edge of the thicket, and could see by the blood that had sprinkled the grass on both sides of the track that she had been hard hit. Chiki was not with us, so I told another boy to follow the track, and I would come after, covering him and looking out ahead, while the rest were to come on behind with their spears. It was a risky thing; but I wanted the claws, and the boys were willing. Slowly and cautiously we proceeded in single file, looking ahead at every step. We had gone about fifty yards, when the front boy gave a jump as if the old gentleman himself had prodded him with his tail, and got behind me. His pains and fright were unnecessary, however, for there, about four yards ahead, the lioness lay dead. We cut off the claws and made for home. On the way home, out of three koodoo we saw feeding on the edge of a bush I managed to drop a doe, which supplied us with enough meat to go on with.

Franz and Paul had also been out, and returned with a wonderful tale of having been chased for ever so far by a rhinoceros; but they had shot nothing.

Hammar had killed a letzwee buck at eight hundred yards,

shooting from the gate of the skerm. Some natives, who witnessed the shot from a distance, bolted in amazement when the buck fell, and he sent out to have the meat brought in.

Jumbo the big donkey showed severe symptoms of fly-bite on the 13th August. In the morning he was quite stiff and unable to rise, but after being set on his feet, struggled about until the stiffness went off a little and he was able to get about and graze. In the evening he was able to walk a little. A diffuse swelling extended from between the hind legs, reaching along the belly up to the forelegs. Otherwise there appeared to be no distress in breathing, or any increased temperature judged by feeling the ears. In the evening, Matambanja arrived with his followers. He said he was tired from his journey, so after a short palaver, he went to rest in a skerm his followers made close to ours. They gave us some fat from a bull eland that they had killed on the way to visit us.

The 14th of August was a very disheartening and disappointing day for us. Matambanja complained bitterly of the smallness of the presents we gave to him, a great chief who was ruler on the Chobe. And the more we gave the more he seemed to increase his capacity for receiving and demanding additional presents; till at last not wishing to quite impoverish ourselves, we were obliged to be firm in our denials to hand over anything more. I am sure the rascal had never seen so many white men's goods together in one place as we presented him freely with, hoping to gain his favour. But no, as long as anything remained to us, he expressed a desire to have it, and seemed to be of opinion that he was ill-treated unless he got it. The rapacity of this chief was actually boundless. After he had got all we would give spontaneously, he started telling his men to help themselves, and one seized an iron dish lying by the fire. But we started up in assumed anger and made such a fuss that they found this would not pay, at least not now; so Matambanja then tried by promising to give us bearers—who should help us all the way to Debabe's on the Okavango—to get a further *douceur*. He would send to-morrow for the men to

come for certain. But experience had taught us that Matambanja was not to be trusted; else, where were the men he had previously promised me? And then, even if they came, there was no dependence to be placed on their fulfilling the sham orders this class of man might probably give them. It was only a blind to get more goods. But we had made up our minds to be dupes no longer, and replied that we would now give nothing more until after the work was completed, and his men had delivered us at the Okavango, where we would be prepared to pay them for their services. Matambanja played us a final stroke by telling our boys that ahead were many dangers to be expected from robber tribes, and advised us to go back to where we came from, otherwise we would surely be killed. He also spoke vaguely of dangers on the road to Walfish bay. As his geographical knowledge of Walfish bay must necessarily be on a par with the rest of his general knowledge of African geography, we attached small weight to his advice, and begged him to go and fetch us the bearers and guides we wanted. He went off without bidding us much of a farewell, with a threatening 'We shall see each other again' sort of manner, that taught us there was not much to be expected from him in a friendly way. Subsequently we came to the conclusion that it was his object to keep us on the Chobe, where we could more easily have been robbed by his people.

I wish here to particularly point out the causes of our difficulties, as a hint to those who may ever wish to travel through those inhospitable regions. In the first place, we had insufficient bearers, and consequently were dependent upon the natives for assistance, through no fault of our own, but through the desertion of Jan Veyers, who should have seen us up to this point, when, with our respectably sized following, we would have made sufficient impression on the natives to bid them beware of interfering with us. And secondly, a mistake of vast importance, we were compelled to camp too long in one spot, in the neighbourhood of many villages where the inhabitants could take our measure accurately, and had time to mature plans

against us. The impulse of a native is, at the first meeting, to fear, and consequently to respect the newcomer; then, as he becomes better acquainted, to be familiar; and gradually this feeling grows into contempt, unless one is backed by a following sufficiently large to enforce respect. Coming as we did without messengers from the king, and going by their reckoning nowhere, we were simply waifs who had opportunely fallen into their clutches to be handled as they pleased, without much possible chance of inquiry or consequences in case the worst happened to us. We were nothing more than an irresponsible set of tramps in their eyes—not even elephant-hunters—with whom they could do as they pleased, as we were without a sufficient force to protect ourselves. Under these circumstances, it is not in the wild native's character to make a display of anything approaching humanity: rather did their instincts lead them to covet our goods, which they meant to have, if the cost was not too great.

A traveller should always avoid delaying near villages in the interior, and push on, before the natives have a chance of estimating the value of the goods he carries, without allowing them time to get together to form any evil designs. Once a good day's march beyond their homes, he enters another district where it is beyond the power and inclinations of those behind to follow up the traveller. Such an act would lead to complications with the next chief, who of course wishes to make his own arrangements; and as it always takes the native mind several days to formulate a plan of action, the traveller, well supplied with his own bearers, can with a bold front push on through inhabited parts, only stopping to buy corn, and to make occasional presents to the chiefs. At convenient stopping-places distant from natives—where he will usually also find plenty of game to feed his boys on—he can rest. The question of how many packs he should take must be judged to a nicety; and he should have sufficient bearers and some to spare for emergencies, so as to be quite independent of local natives for any further assistance than that of corn for food. With an

expedition there should also be at least several exceptionally good shots to kill game, and also by their prowess to impress any natives *en route* with a due regard for the possible consequences of interference.

Another important fact which the traveller must study, is to have no natives in the expedition belonging to hostile tribes, or those speaking the language of a country the tribe has been at war with; for whenever disputes occur between your men and the natives, a matter of almost daily occurrence, over such trivial affairs as buying corn, etc., the former are sure to use the offensive language to annoy the natives, in retaliation for insults usually freely indulged in on these occasions. This stupid behaviour naturally gives the opportunity to the natives to accuse the boys using the offensive language of being spies, and it will take all one's influence and power to prevent their being killed; for this unhappy *contre-temps* usually excites the dormant bloodthirstiness to immediate activity, causing no end of excitement and instant united action on part of the people one is anxious to propitiate, and supplies them with an excusable reason for killing the offenders. And should such killing be found an easy matter, there is no telling where the affair may end, for in this case the natives, always armed, take care to be well spread about in the camp, under the pretence of talking or dealing, which immediately offers the best opportunity for a hand-to-hand *mêlée*, with the express benefit of a surprise in their favour, when the advantage due to long range shooting to keep an enemy at a distance is nullified.

To guard against such possibilities we always warned our boys to be careful; and conducted purchases at a little distance from the actual camp, keeping our guns all loaded for possible emergencies. But Paul and one of our boys, a Makalaka named Styrman, from the borders of Matabeleland, who spoke the language of the Matabele, in spite of our warnings often derided the natives in that language, knowing well what terror was connected with the name of marauding Amatabele hordes, though these had never actually penetrated to this distance.

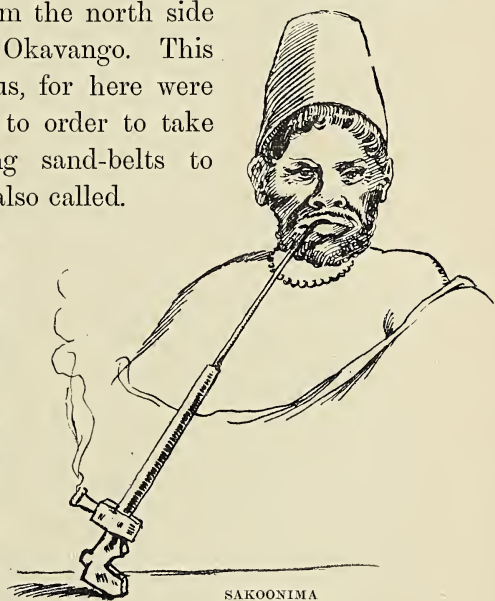
This indiscretion of Paul's and Styrman's caused many surly glances to be thrown at them by the natives, that boded no good to their well-being.

On the 14th of August in the evening, seven Mombokooshus, subjects of Debabe on the Okavango, came to our camp from the north, headed by a strong-featured, large-headed old man of very commanding ways and violent temper, called Sakoonima. They had been into the Barotzi valley, trading for hoes and spears and other ironware which they got in exchange for ostrich feathers, and were carrying with them. They had just crossed the Chobe from the north side on their way home to the Okavango. This was most opportune for us, for here were guides, so to speak, made to order to take us across the intervening sand-belts to Debabe or Indala as he is also called.

From a Portuguese map in our possession, we estimated the distance across the desert to be under eighty miles, but this proved wrong, as the river's course in this map had been laid down from native hearsay only, no proper measurements ever having been made. In

fact we were the first white people that ever trod this particularly neglected corner of South Africa.

We were pretty well convinced from what had passed that Matambanja would send us no bearers, so we tried, by making friends with the small chief Kikonto, living opposite to us across the Liana river, to acquire his influence amongst the people of his district, in order to forward us over to the Okavango river. Kikonto told us to wait till next day, when he would see what could be done in the matter.



SAKOONIMA



SAKOONIMA'S HEAD MAN

In the early morning of next day, the 15th, the leader of the Okavango boys came to us with the news that he had heard we were this day to be attacked by Kikonto's people, with whom a troop of other natives had assembled themselves. He gave us the advice to be off immediately, and his boys would assist to carry some of our loads. We were unwilling to make a bolt of it, for, in the first place, we felt quite prepared to face an attack made by people of Kikonto's class, and secondly, we knew that any display of hastiness or trepidation would be a bad precedent for the natives to get hold of, for a hasty retreat to unknown regions beyond would inevitably lead to our being followed up, when probably the retreat would end in being a flight. To these chances we were not going to expose ourselves, so, arranging with the Mombokooshus to wait a little longer, I sent Franz and two of our best boys over to interview Kikonto, and to try and find out what was going on. We watched them traverse the open flat between us and the river, and then cross over the Liana, in a canoe, and make their way up the sandy slope amongst the open trees, till they disappeared in the distance. We had not long to wait before we saw Franz and the two boys returning at a sharp run, followed by a crowd of natives, some two hundred yards behind, who, evidently, were chasing them. Franz and the boys were good runners, and we knew that they could easily maintain the start they had got; but our fear was that they would be caught at the river bank, while trying to cross over in the canoes, for, before they could get under way, the chances were that the natives would be on them, and Franz could not swim. To give them time at the crossing, Hammar and I dropped a few bullets in front of the crowd over Franz's head, with a nine-hundred yards' range, just to let them understand what might take place if they came any closer, whereat they hesitated for the moment. We then saw Franz take a running leap into the river, and the splashes of

the two boys on each side of Franz, who caught him under the arms, and piloted him over the river, clothes, gun, and all. As soon as they landed, they continued running, but finding no one following, they stopped, and showered terms of opprobrium and challenges on their pursuers, who now disappeared amongst the trees and bushes.

Things were beginning to look warm for us, and we listened with a good deal of interest to what Franz had to relate when he reached camp. It appears that, when he got near Kikonto's kraal, his suspicions were aroused by finding about three hundred natives assembled in war council, sitting, some armed with bows and arrows, and the others with assegais and sticks, in the usual circle, while Kikonto and two other head men, unarmed, were in the centre, talking excitedly to the warriors. They spoke in a dialect our boys did not understand, but the situation was clear enough to convince him that an attack on us was intended. Franz, who carried his rifle, a weapon the natives are in much dread of, approached to within a hundred yards, and called out to Kikonto to come out, as he wished to speak to him. Kikonto answered that Franz must come into the circle to consult with him, to which demand Franz answered by ostentatiously loading his rifle; he knew his own running powers excelled those of most natives, and felt that, with the start he had, they could not easily catch him. Kikonto then said he was going to fetch some beer for Franz, and then went amongst the huts, from whence Franz soon detected him emerging on the other side, armed with an assegai, and trying to crawl unseen along a fence, or hedge, in his direction. Franz told the boys to shout out that he would shoot with his gun any one who attempted to approach him, and then backed off, facing the crowd, until he got another fifty yards or so, and then trusting to his speed, turned and ran, accompanied by the two boys. As soon as they started, the whole crowd of natives jumped up with a great yell and gave chase, and Franz said that, hearing the noise, he 'looped lat de stoff so trek'—ran that the dust whirled again, but finding that he distanced his com-

panions, and remembering that the river had to be crossed, he slacked off till they ranged up alongside of him, and then they ran together. The boys told him to jump for it when they reached the water, and they would pull him through. With the shout still ringing in his ears, he made up his mind and jumped, with what result the reader knows.

It was quite evident that to stop where we were meant that we should be attacked shortly, so we now agreed to go with the Mombokooshus, whose excitement was tremendous. They wanted to be off at once, and the old man, their leader, flourished his long metal pipe, ordering here, and swearing there, until we had to tell him to be quiet.

We hastily sorted out the more important goods, and discarded everything superfluous and weighty, except ammunition, so as to reduce the packs to the number of our bearers, and then, each of ourselves taking what we found most valuable, we made a bonfire of the balance. Our books, and the leaves of the *Nautical Almanac* now out of date, were also thrown aside, and, lastly, our treasured meat-forcing machine, which was flung in pieces in the sand, so that the natives should have no use from it. Meanwhile, the old Mombokooshu, agitated by the shouts from some natives, who had crawled up nearer, through some bush higher up the river, telling him and our boys, if they would fly and leave the goods, that no harm would come to them, urged us to depart. But we wanted the burning goods to be consumed before we left, as an object lesson to the natives, and also had to perform the melancholy duty of shooting the poor donkeys, who were now so far gone from 'fly-bite,' that they could hardly stir. This done, I gave the order to 'a twente, aroo tsamaya'—'Up, let's go!' Each boy grasped his pack, and we were just starting, when a plaintive bleat from our little goat, Blanche, induced several boys to make a rush to pick her up. Chiki was the first to catch her, and set her over his load, where she hung contentedly for the rest of the march. We were obliged to make a détour from the known footpath along the Liana, as it appeared likely, from the

shouting of the natives, that they were congregating somewhere ahead, probably in some favourable spot to ambush us. We made straight out, west by south, into a long sand-belt, keeping close together, Hammar and I each with two-hundred and seventy-five rounds of ammunition on our persons, to do the best we could with, if called upon to take action, and also to personally have a supply of cartridges to see us back to Panda Matenga, in case the emergency required it. Hammar carried a large calabash of water, as we did not know when or where next we would get a drink, and I had my knapsack, purposely brought for use in the event of occasions such as this, stuffed with many articles that would otherwise have been left behind. There were one and a half bags of small shot, thirty-two four-ounce bullets, two-hundred rounds Martini-Henry ammunition, a pair of boots, my telescope, and some small odds and ends stowed in this bag; besides this, I carried my rifle, and seventy-five rounds of ammunition in my cartridge belt.

We had gone about three miles, when some of the natives, who had followed us up again, shouted to our boys to drop the loads and run, otherwise they would get into trouble; but on Hammar and myself firing at them from the rear, they moved off, still warning our boys to do as they were advised.

Our great anxiety was about water, as we did not wish to go towards the Liana river to get a supply, and, none of us knowing the topography, we might pass within a few hundred yards of a pan, and never be aware of its existence in this bush country. Luck favoured us, however, for, after going some four miles, we saw the figure of an old woman, evidently gathering fruit from the ground, as she frequently stooped and picked up something, which she deposited in a basket tied on her back. She was deeply engrossed in this employment, under some gigantic mabula trees growing on our left, without having the faintest notion of our presence. Two of our boys stalked up to the old dame, who proved to be a Mosaro bushwoman. She was intensely startled at our appearance, and hardly able to speak, and it is probably owing to the fright she got that she directed

us corre to a pan of water, a couple of miles off. I wished to oblige her to accompany us, but Hammar, having got the direction correctly, asserted that he could find the spot if she had told the truth—and if not, well, in the usual stubborn resolve not to betray what they wished to keep to themselves, she might lead us a dance to any distant place and then desert during the fast approaching night. Hammar's alternative turned out most satisfactory, for, with a natural instinct for locality thoroughly developed by his profession, he took a bee-line for the indicated spot, through bush and sand-belt for three miles, that led us to within a few hundred yards of the water. We were all but passing the spot, but an apparent depression to the right induced me to investigate the place, while Hammar, still intent upon his 'line,' did not think it advisable to swerve, but agreed to wait till I returned to report on the depression. On nearing the spot I saw several figures of natives, reclining under straw mats they had hung over the low bushes and hanging branches of trees surrounding a pan. They were Mosaros, and this is the only shelter these wandering families avail themselves of during the dry season. Feeling sure that these people had nothing in common with our friends on the Liana, I approached unhesitatingly, and then, seeing the water, fired a shot as a signal to Hammar and the bearers, to let them know that all was well, and they might approach.

The consternation of the Mosaros grouped round the pan on hearing the shot was immense. They fled helter-skelter away into the bush, leaving their little children behind. One poor little brat, not yet old enough to speak, made a bold attempt to fly, but her little legs were too weak to support the body, and she toppled over, but bravely rose again and struggled on, spite of repeated falls. I picked this poor little startled mortal up and fondled it to attract the mother, who I knew would be in hiding not far away, and



A MOSARO

I was right, for she soon came out to within speaking distance

and asked for her child, which I set down and told her to come and fetch, while I retreated. Other mothers of the children lying about also came for their little ones, and as we did not disturb them, the members of the family came up one by one, and soon a friendly feeling was established between us. Our boys were so thoroughly disciplined by this time, that they never even attempted to molest the Mosaros, for whom they usually profess the greatest contempt, as people who have no homes, no chiefs, and no gardens, and whom they compare to the baboons for living wildly in the bush, subsisting mainly on wild fruits and roots, and perhaps what game they may catch in their primitive traps. Any weapons, bows and arrows or spears, they may acquire, are periodically stolen from them by such natives as they may meet with in their peregrinations. It seems that they seldom raise their hands in self-defence against these depredations, trusting by submission to gain the clemency of their robber lords and masters. They probably are guided in this by the necessity they experience of gathering wild fruit to sustain themselves on, as it naturally grows more thickly near the river banks, and consequently nearer to parts inhabited by natives whom they must propitiate to be allowed to reap the meagre harvest that nature has provided. As warriors they are a poor-spirited lot, but are perfect marvels at finding their way about in the otherwise deserted inhospitable sand-belts of the desert. Their accuracy as trackers of game is astonishing; a wounded buck, or lost animal, can never get away from them. Running like sleuth-hounds on a track almost or quite invisible to the eye of less practised hunters, they will continue at a trot for hours at a time, without displaying the least fatigue, until they run the game to earth. They know the habits of all game and birds thoroughly, and can read from a sign in the tracks that would escape the observation of any one else, exactly what the game intends doing—whether it is thirsty, otherwise making for water, or travelling to another district, or if it intends remaining in the district for a short time; whether after feeding there is a probability of the game being found in the neighbour-

hood, and in what direction to look for it. In fact their knowledge of field and forest lore reaches the highest pitch of perfection, and were it not for their unstable characters, they would make invaluable associates of all the classes of mankind that have to seek their existence in the desert. But I believe that there is hardly a case on record where a Mosaro has associated for any extended length of time with either a native tribe or a white hunter. Influenced by the invisible power of some unknown attraction in the desert, a Mosaro will leave the best employer without warning, and, not taking anything he is not entitled to in the shape of goods, will simply disappear like a phantom into the vast sand-belts probably, like an animal, under the influence of season, to pluck some favourite berries now approaching maturity, or to take up the track of an ostrich, to follow her to her nest, because the laying season is approaching, or for any one of the other hundred reasons that form a part of his life in the wilds.

When they are on the move they travel stupendous distances on foot across the sandy wastes without water. The men go first, and the women and children follow after as best they can. No thought of those behind seems to trouble the foremost as they trudge along, nor are they influenced by any such trivial circumstances as illness to delay a journey. The sick woman with the young child, probably born on the journey, takes her chance with the rest. Such a mere detail as bringing a child into the world by the way does not trouble her much. She may be detained half an hour or so through the fact; but, retiring behind a convenient bush to fulfil this natural duty, she manages by herself, unseen, and unhelped by the tender assistance from one of her own sex; and when her troubles are over, and they usually are over immediately the child is born, she slings the little one on to her back, and follows on the faint trail of the receding party as securely as one of us threads his way along a crowded thoroughfare. Should the child not survive this rough treatment, or the burden, added to the other things she carries, prove too heavy, and perhaps the water too distant to reach easily with

this additional load, without compunction she flings the child on to, or into, the nearest bush, and proceeds on her way without any qualms of conscience, so long as the ragged mats and household utensils it is her lot to transport reach the camp in safety. Thus they trek from place to place in the desert, guided only by their desires and necessities, to find wild fruit or roots that they know are ripening in a district often many miles distant from where they happen to be at the moment.

The Mosaros naturally are acquainted with all or most of the pans of water existing in the desert, and usually camp some miles away from these, that the secret of this knowledge may not unwittingly be betrayed to a casual passer-by, who might take advantage of the knowledge and bring more people to the spot to help consume the meagre store of fruit or roots on which they subsist. Extremely jealous of their water, often only existing in little pits dug in the damp sand, they have been known to watch others suffering the acutest thirst and never betray their secret, hoping probably that, as well as protecting their own welfare, they may perhaps profit by the death of the travellers, whose goods in this event will fall to their lot. Their natural intelligence seems warped to the conditions subsisting around them, and all the so-called better feeling amongst other races seems to have no part in their existence. Selfishness and fear are the only two distinguishing emotions that prompt their actions, and these are brought about by the harsh conditions that govern their lives, and the brutal treatment meted out to them by the other natives with whom they of necessity must occasionally come in contact.

From the data I could gather concerning these people, it appears that they have been fugitives from civilisation since the early days when the Cape Colony became peopled by Whites. They are descendants of Hottentots, and, spite of occasional intermixture with pure natives, still maintain the chief anatomical characteristics distinguishing their forefathers, as well as many customs belonging to the Hottentots. They resemble most the Gona Hottentots, many of whom were still residing near

Georgetown in the Old Colony in 1860, and have in common with these the law that when a man marries a girl he has the first call on her next unmarried sister, in case his wife becomes ill or dies, without making any further payment to the parents on behalf of this new wife. They argue that she will make the best mother to the children of her departed sister, and therefore the man is entitled to her. The man has no right to claim a third sister, unless under a new purchase, for whatever price the parents may fix on their child, as in the first instance.

The language is also much the same as the Hottentot, having only suffered slight variations from the original, through many years of separation from the parent tongue. The name 'Mosarwa,' in the Kalahari, is given to them because they live in groups of small families without any distinct headman, each group independent of the others.

Some words that are alike amongst the Gona Hottentots and the Mosaros are :—Water = Sha, Elephant = Swa, Path = Dau, Fire = Qay, Camel = Gabe, Eland = Du, Lion = Simba, Buffalo = Qauqau with two clicks, Ostrich = Garoo, Stone = Garau. The language is full of the most peculiar clicks, which it is futile for any pen to try to reproduce; but, generally speaking, they may be put down as *linguo-dental*, *linguo-palatal*, *linguo-buccinatal*, and *linguo-palato-laryngeal*. A minute investigator may expose several more combinations of clicks, but the inquisitive reader can compose these for himself by mixing the raw material given above, and grouping the sounds to please himself; they are sure to be right if the clatter made in such conversations as I have heard between these people may be taken as an indication to confirm the statement, for I can safely liken the language to the clicking of a multitude of different rusty old gun-locks simultaneously set in motion. It is simply appalling to hear the fatty click gut tkoot, tick lick mktchuk gtkowktok gtu-gkti-gkkij, accompanied by many gurglings one might think are worthy of better things than to represent this language.

CHAPTER XV

More about the Mosaros—Bushman paintings—Sleep in the forest without fires—Keep the natives off by shooting—Excitement of our party at a wild stampede of phenomenal quantities of game in an open valley—Camp in mabula forest—Half expect native attack—Startled by strange appearance of round light in the forest—The mabula tree and fruit—Welcome sound of the grey khoran's cry—Game—Paul digs for water.

WHEN a young Mosarwa feels prompted by the sharp sting of Cupid's arrow to make advances to the father of the girl who has enthralled him, he brings such presents as the circumstances permit him to acquire to the stern parent, and lays them at his feet. He then sits for a couple of hours without remark, and if the desires of the father's heart are satisfied with the 'sacrifice,' he also remains perfectly still. Convinced now that he can win the girl, he still has a tremendous duty to perform, no less a feat than running down a giraffe, and killing it single-handed with a spear. Without a word he starts up, and disappears like a yellow apparition in the bush, to fulfil this arduous task, which is intended to demonstrate to the parents that he is man enough to provide food for their child, and also to supply meat for the ensuing jollification. When he finds the track of his quarry, he follows it until he reaches the game, and then starts off at a good trot in the wake of the swaying troop, keeping on hour after hour, until the game tires and slacks off its speed a little. Then with rapid strides he rushes alongside, and jabs his spear deep into the side of the fattest giraffe, dealing it a wound that soon causes it to lag behind its companions. Now he runs alongside and drives the faltering brute in the desired direction homewards, until he notices, from the lessening motion of the tail, that the beast is about done, and that to drive it further

would spoil the meat. Then again ranging alongside, he despatches the enormous beast with several rapid thrusts in the chest, taking care to give the vicious front feet of the brute a wide berth, for, if caught by one of the chopping downward strokes of these tremendous legs, his career would be ended. When the beast falls at last, he covers the body over with grass and bushes to protect it from the keen-eyed vultures, and goes to the place where he left his future father-in-law and the family expectantly awaiting his return. Silently he approaches and lays down the ruddy spear at the father's feet, and then with a great shout the people, old and young, hurry off on his back track to the place where the giraffe lies dead. The carcass is soon cut up, and the meat carried home; but, meanwhile, it is not etiquette for the youth, who with the father of the bride remains in the camp, to speak: he sits silently watching the old man, who favours him with an equal courtesy until the meat comes in, and then 'they all live happy ever afterwards.'

In cases where the matrimonial giraffe is scarce, some other kind of large game may be killed as a substitute. But the Mosarwas endeavour to comply with the old custom as nearly as the circumstances will allow.

The common term Bushmen, applied indiscriminately to the Mosarwas and others, might lead the reader to the conclusion that there is some relation existing between the Mosarwa Hottentots and the diminutive people who more properly bear that name. As far as I can gather, these are two distinct tribes, whose principal difference lies in their stature. There is no doubt that the Hottentots, with their large neighbours the Korannas, and the Bushmen proper, belong to one type of humanity, and form a class by themselves. But between the two former and the latter there is a clear distinguishing mark in the size. Some authorities contend that the Bushmen are artificially dwarfed by the many privations they have undergone as fugitives from their organised neighbours; that their existence, spent in one successive effort

to preserve their lives, by fleeing and constantly hiding amongst the inaccessible portion of the mountainous country bounding the High- from the Lowlands in South Africa, has influenced their well-being, and has shown its consequences in the stunted figures of this hardly pressed tribe. While acknowledging the similarity of form and feature between these people, I feel compelled to submit that there are other inherent qualities not dependent on physical causes, that must account for the permanent diminutive stature of the Bushmen, else why do they not develop increased physique when subjected to a peaceful existence and liberal diet for a generation or two, circumstances some of these individuals who have come under my observation have enjoyed? They remain small even under the most advantageous circumstances. There are but few families of pure Bushmen surviving at present, and these are fast degenerating through intermarriage with outside elements, thus justifying the prediction that the Bushmen proper will shortly be an extinct race, and soon our succeeding generation will only hear of the past existence of these pygmies as a matter of history, and from remains found in obscure graves.

It has not been my fortune yet to see any of the Central African pygmies, the Akka; but, judging from the published illustrations, I have little hesitation in stating that these are a distinct race from the Bushmen, although much of the same stature. Where they appear to fail most in comparison with the Bushman is in the formation of chin, which in the Akka is small and weak, while in the Bushman it is of much stronger proportions.

Bushmen have the peculiar flat face of the Hottentot, with enormous cheek bones, and almost without a prominent nose,



BUSHMAN WOMAN

the wings of this organ seeming to rise out of the face like orifices covered with flaps. They have a somewhat brachy-



BUSHMAN PAINTINGS

cephalic shape of head and prognathous jaws, with the hair tufted in woolly curling islets on the skull, showing bare spaces of scalp shining between the agglomerated lumps of wool. The skin is yellow, occasionally pitted with small black spots, and the limbs delicate in appearance, generally possessing large joints, which make up by increased leverage for the apparent want of muscle. The absurd characteristic amongst the females of these tribes is the enormous development of the gluteal regions, which assume proportions I leave the reader to form an opinion of for himself from the illustration (p. 183) taken from a photo herewith published.

There is a peculiarly interesting circumstance connected with these Bushmen that has caused much speculation amongst the white inhabitants of South Africa. On the bare exposed walls,



BUSHMAN PAINTINGS

or rather faces, of sandstone rocks, jutting prominently from the frowning heights of the Drakensberg and neighbouring mountains, forming the shallow caves once inhabited by Bushmen, may be found paintings of a brownish red colour depicting scenes from their daily life. Naturally, the execution is of a primitive order, but still sufficiently well done to clearly show the intention of the artist, such as the hunt after game, or the attraction exercised by some female, of more beautiful proportion than her fellows, over the males, etc. Not the least interesting feature of these paintings is that they have existed, exposed to the inclemencies of the South African climate and weather, through a range, in proved instances, of at least fifty years and even more, and yet are only slightly injured, more by the weathering of the rock than by the fading of the pigment used

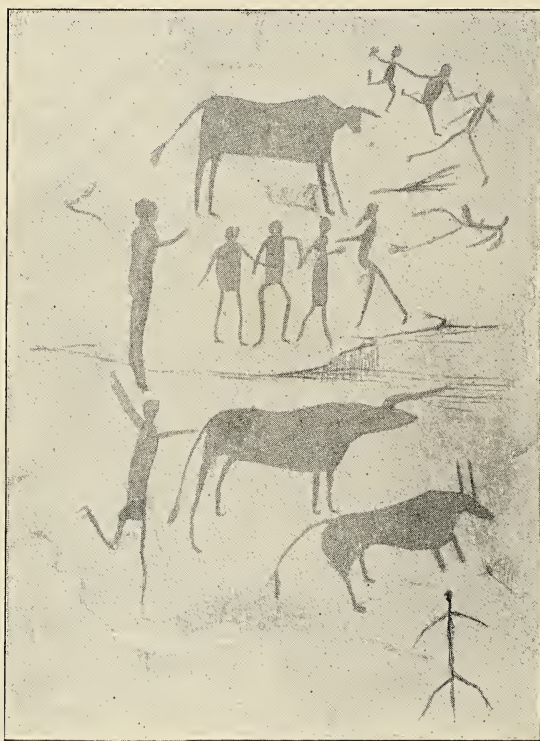


BUSHMAN PAINTINGS

in the colouring. Fourteen years ago some of these paintings were shown to me on the face of a rock on the east side

of the jutting cliff bordering the crown of the Indoomeni mountain in Natal, which I was fortunate enough to have copied by a water-colour artist in Natal, and these paintings are herewith submitted to the reader's kindly observation.

Many experts in these matters are of opinion that these paintings are a kind of sign-writing, to express to other Bushmen visiting the spot later, what has taken place in that district; and since in many cases there is no appearance



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of white people, or people with clothes, amongst these productions, it is argued with reason that this is a certain indication that such were not known to the people at the time the paintings were executed. Consequently the date of their being painted cannot be later than the occupation of these countries by whites, somewhere in the early thirties of this century. To detail the history and depredations

of these fierce little marauders on the incoming whites does not fall within the province of this work, and I feel already the necessity of apologising to the reader for the transgression thus far.



BUSHMAN PAINTINGS

At the pan of water we prepared our evening meal and rested, but as soon as it was fairly dark, we passed the word to each boy quietly to get up with his load and follow on to where we should lead them. Going in a westerly direction for about a mile, we deposited the packs in an irregular line in the dark forest, and silently lay down to sleep without lighting a fire or betraying our whereabouts by unnecessary turmoil. It was too dark for any one to have followed the trail, and we felt safe from molestation, at any rate until daylight set in. Hammar took the first watch until midnight, and then woke me to look after the camp for the rest of the night. Nothing occurred, however, to disturb the chorus of gentle snoring around, and with the first streak of dawn we rose and marched on in a west-north-west direction, and after three and a half miles came upon the banks of the Liana river, where I singled out a ram from a troop of grazing letzwee buck, and shot him for breakfast. Unfortunately the shot betrayed our whereabouts at once, and the news of our position travelled along amongst the excited natives, who several times threatened to attack us, and shouted to our boys to leave us. But these, through our long companionship, had learned to trust us, and never made the slightest attempt to fly; on the contrary, probably having more faith in our strength than the facts warranted, they hurled back defiance and insult with interest, and jeered at the natives for not coming on, when they would see what they would get, etc., with so much self-assurance as, coupled with an occasional long-range shot from us, kept this fraternity at quite a respectable distance while we marched on. Of course, Hammar and I encouraged our boys by good example, and we all kept up the appearance of looking upon the affair as a huge joke that would terminate badly for any one attempting to take any liberties with us, all except Franz, whom Hammar, being the nearest, was obliged to kick into silence, for croaking out fears of the future, and talking of returning to Panda Matenga. I fear that some of the shots fired at the Mashubia must have

told even at the long ranges we fired at, for later in the day they disappeared and troubled us no more.

A female rhinoceros with a calf crossed my path as I was walking slightly in advance of the column towards afternoon, and I felt towards her much as Reynard the fox did towards the forbidden fowls in Goethe's *Reineke Fuchs*, but restrained myself from shooting, although she stood and looked at me quite half a minute from fifty yards off, deciding whether she would charge or leave me alone. At last she went off. A little further on I came on to a salt lick or creek that ran from the south-west into the Liana river, and even as I write now my mind is pleasantly excited at the marvellous sight of game that burst on my view. As far as I could see up the open laagte the ground was teeming with heavy game. Close in front of me stood three giraffes; a little further on a troop of seven more; between these a troop of buffalo; a little beyond, troops of giraffe, eland, buffalo, hartebeest, quagga, letzwee, rooi buck, blue wildebeest, ostriches, reed buck, and more, and more, repeated over again until the whole valley seemed one teeming mass of life. Unable to control myself from excitement, and wondering what effect a shot would have on this vast assembly of game, I stealthily looked round, and finding none of the party in sight, although there were more reasons than one why I should not shoot, I guiltily clinked the nearest giraffe sixty yards off under the ear with a Martini-Henry bullet, and she dropped, with one chopping blow of her powerful forelegs, into the reeds they were standing in, which effectively hid the body from sight as it lay. The shot boomed along the valley, hedged in by the forest on either side, awakening the recumbent and resting game into activity. Mercy! what a wonderful sight it was! The troops careered about like mad, till the earth reverberated to their hoofs; some ran one way, and some another. Many troops thundered down in my direction, and passed close to the advancing column of boys. Two rhinoceros that had been reposing in the reeds lining the little creek where the giraffe was lying, started up, and, with elastic bounds no one would



BUSHMAN PAINTINGS

give them credit for, bolted for better cover, and the giraffes made off, with their long, swinging, pendulous strides, till lost in the dust and general turmoil in the distance. Some lions that I could not plainly see for dust roared loudly, and joined the general stampede, for a stampede it was on the largest scale I ever witnessed, in which at least some ten thousand head of large game took part.

Hammar and the others, hearing the noise and seeing some of the rushing troops of animals pass them, came running breathlessly up to inquire into the cause of the commotion, but too late to enjoy the spectacle to the full. In a few minutes the valley was practically emptied of the vast herds of game, and only a few smaller troops of hartebeest and quaggas remained, who careered about and even pretended to charge at us, but, wheeling, turned off again at about one hundred yards, and circled round at a great rate as if in sport, displaying their speed and graceful proportions to best advantage.

When it was all over, Hammar upbraided me for firing the unnecessary shot at so ticklish a moment, and I had to get out of it as best I could without confessing anything about the giraffe, for I felt certain that if our guides, the Mombokooshus, fell foul of so much meat, they would insist on eating their way through the greater part of it before going on—a little matter of a week or so, that did not suit my books, especially in the neighbourhood of the Mashubia we had just left behind.

We walked up this laagte, in which the grass had been trodden to powder by the game, and came at the top end of the valley to a picturesque green glade fringed on both sides with beautiful forest of mabula trees, and, finding two fountains of fresh water here, we camped for the night about one hundred yards in the mabula forest on our right. There was no under-wood, and the bare white sand on which we slept was thinly bestrewn with leaves. We were still somewhat anxious about the Mashubia behind us, although it appeared as if they had returned for good; still this might only be a ruse to lure us into a feeling of security, and make it easier for them to attack us.

At any rate we made a strong 'skerm,' and eating of our letzwee meat and stewed mabulas, made a hearty meal and prepared for the night.

Hammar was to take the first watch as before, and I the second, from midnight till break of day. Fatigue played no rôle in the execution of this duty. We had carried heavy packs all day, and now neither of us contemplated shirking the responsibility of watching half the night alone for a moment. Our boys were useless as watchers; for once by the fireside at night, after a hard day's work, even the redoubtable Chiki was not to be depended on to take a share of the watch; and as one of us had in any case to remain awake, it was superfluous to keep one of the boys from their much needed rest. Their eyes would close even if life was the forfeit. Those who have never tried it may perhaps think it is not so difficult a matter to keep awake half the night after a hard day's tramp. But the absolute dreariness of the watch, especially in the small hours of the morning between three and five A.M., when all is still, and the only diversion is kicking up the fire now and then, while as one sits the eyelids sink and sink down without one's knowing it, and asleep one fancies one's-self awake, or awake fancies one's-self asleep, it does not matter which, for one is nearly asleep in either case, to wake up with a start and hurriedly reinspect all the shadows, nooks, and corners where a possible enemy might be lurking, thanking one's stars that for this once the expected assegai has not passed crashing through one's ribs, the thought of which possibility keeps one wide awake for the rest of the watch! And then the dawn that will never come! If one could only be up and promenading about it would not be so bad, but it is not safe to walk about, for in so doing, whilst one's back is turned at either end of the promenade, a silent dark figure may slip up between the shadows to take nearer cover in the intervals. No, the cruelty lies in the fact that one must sit still and endeavour to hear rather than see any movement. From the back one is protected by the skerm; an attack will come from the front, and this is the point to be guarded. Then



BUSHMAN PAINTINGS

the mysterious sounds of the forest in the early part of the night, even the falling leaves, rivet one's attention.

The long-drawn howl of the wolf in the distance, and the 'chiki, chiki, chiki,' mirthless laugh of jackals, if not cheerful, at least is a sign that no human beings are stirring in that direction. Occasionally booming through the forest comes the hunting grunt of lions, or perhaps, when a kill has been made, the roar calling their mates together, who answer from afar off in the same note. And now, thank Heaven, surely here is the peculiar faint greenish colour pervading the atmosphere that in Africa always foreshadows the approach of day. Solemnly one feels more than sees this light, and then, there at last it is growing lighter—yes, it is the day. With shout and bound to drive off the remnants of sleep, one is up, and the day begins.

It was seven o'clock in the evening, and I had just cast off my boots, and was lazily closing my eyes, with my pipe still between my teeth, in dreamy satisfaction and rest after the hard day's march with the heavy pack on my back, when a startled yell from one of the boys brought me on to my feet in an instant. Grasping the double shot-gun, loaded with heavy swan-shot, from the row of loaded guns standing in readiness in the skerm in case of attack, as the most serviceable weapon to use in the dark, I followed the excited gaze of Hammar and the boys, who were eagerly looking by the flickering firelight at something amongst the large-stemmed trees up in the sand-belt. As soon as I had focussed the position, instead of seeing a horde of advancing savages, as expected, there appeared a pale yellow light, circular in form, about the size of a plate, steadily resting three feet above the ground, apparently eighty yards off, in the black darkness. While looking, the light moved steadily forward and backward several yards; then, standing still for a time, it afterwards repeated the movements. To both Hammar and myself this was a strange occurrence, and none of the boys could give any explanation of this appearance beyond suggesting that it might be the eye of a lion or rhinoceros, whose organs of vision are fitted, as is well known, in common with several other

animals, with a peculiar membrane called tapetum, that has the power of throwing a faint light into the surrounding darkness. In this case the idea was preposterous on the very face of it, owing to the size of the light, and Hammar and I expected this to be some ruse of the Mashubia, who had followed us, hoping to bring forth a scare by this unique device, and to attract our attention in one direction while they tried an assault from another. So we promptly put two boys to peer out of the rear of the skerm to see if there were any skulking figures about, while we watched the strange apparition in front.

Some ten minutes of this by-play exhausted my patience, so, bidding the whole party strictly to stay within the precincts of the camp, and on no account to stir out, I took the four-ounce gun, and, putting a tree between myself and the light, moved out about half-way towards it. When I peered out from behind my cover at this distance the light was gone, but in the moment there appeared a large, dark shadow about the size of an ox, though lower, moving ten yards in front of me. I pulled off at this, but the flash of the gun revealed that I had been mistaken, for there was nothing but the bare ground in front of me. The flash, however, revealed the outline of a man standing on my left. On grasping the figure it proved to be Hammar, who had followed me up to take his share of the adventure, and, when I come to think of it, perhaps it is just as well that the gun was empty when I noticed him, for at the first sight of a human figure in an unexpected place he certainly ran a risk I do not care to contemplate.

As the light was gone, we returned to the camp, when, after a space of a few minutes, the light appeared again in its faded yellow entirety. Feeling sure that no human agency was responsible for the light, I went quietly to sleep till awakened to take my watch, when the light was still in full action, and remained so until with the first streak of dawn it disappeared. With daylight we hunted the spot in vain for traces of animal or bird spoor to which we could attach the responsibility of this appearance, but the only trace visible on the ground was

the track of a tiny bird not bigger than a lark, which, from its size, could have no connection with the question. Had the light been stationary, and not moved backward and forward, we could have easily found an explanation for its existence in the colonies of luminous infusoria that often inhabit old tree stumps, and by their existence impart a luminous appearance to their habitation, or, had the light been playing near the fountains instead of over the sandy soil in the belt, there still might have been a reasonable explanation for its existence given, but as it was, we were compelled to admit that we could assign no cause for its appearance. Old Sakoonima's explanation that it was a 'star' sent by the 'Great Being' to indicate a subsequent heavy rainy season seemed to be as near as any conclusion we could come to, so we left the argument there. From inquiries made later we have not been able to get at the cause of this light, and even had to put up with the mortification of being told by a very learned German professor, that probably this phenomenon existed only in our excited fancies. The fact remains, and therefore I record it; the elucidation will surely follow some day.

The mabula tree, so often mentioned in these pages, plays a conspicuous rôle in the economy of the natives' lives who inhabit these parts, for its fruit-bearing qualities. Usually the tree has a straight stem several feet thick, growing mostly to the height of over thirty feet before it sends out its wide-spreading branches, which are thickly clothed with small, oval, dark green leaves. The fruit, dotted about in great profusion amongst the leaves, is from the nature of its position very difficult to get at; however, it falls in showers when ripe; and a group of these trees, usually growing about ten yards apart from each other, just distant enough for the dark foliage of the separate trees to intermingle and form a grand canopy aloft, through which the sun's rays rarely penetrate, supplies many families of natives with the means of subsistence. They grow mostly on clear sandy soil without underwood; thus when the ripe fruit falls it is easily

gathered. The natives informed us that these trees bear fruit every other year, and sometimes only every third year. In colour of a yellowish brown, the fruit when ripe is about the size of a plum, and nearly spherical in shape. Between the outer, somewhat tough, skin and the large hairy pip is a pulpy fruity mass of sweet taste, something like a good banana in flavour, which we consumed raw, or boiled into a soup, or even fermented into a very nutritious and agreeable beverage. There is a peculiar sweet smell attached to this pulp that reminded one most of the aroma of opium, and in fact we found that the consumption of this fruit brought about a state of the bowels not unlike that of opium or laudanum taken in mild doses. We had to resort freely to the medicine chest to accelerate the flagging energies of our bowels after eating much of this fruit, which by the way also left a dry taste in the mouth and throat. The pip, when broken open, revealed a seed much like an almond in taste, but shaped more irregularly than an almond should be.

With regard to the statement that the mabula trees are biennials, it is necessary to make the remark that all the trees we passed were bearing fruit at this season of the year, and although we were assured over and over again by the natives of the accuracy of their account, we should have been more satisfied to have a little actual proof, by seeing some trees not in fruit to confirm the statement.

The wood of the mabula is excellent for ornamental household purposes, acquiring a rich light brown surface when polished, with a beautiful tangled hard grain. The Jesuit Fathers at Panda Matenga had all their household furniture made from this wood, and one table top in particular was made from a single cross section of a large tree.

We were now well rid of the Mashubia people, and following old Sakoonima, our guide, before the sun was well up we had made five miles, each of us heavily burdened as heretofore. A troop of blue wildebeest scampering past gave Hammar a favourable opportunity for a shot, and he dropped one. The country, hitherto covered with thicker bush, was now more open

and clad with thin strips of mimosa trees at the edges of which, wherever we gazed, troops of large game could be seen—eland, buffalo, giraffe, hartebeest, and others, and we also crossed the tracks of elephants and rhinoceros. The harsh call of the grey khoran, which we had last heard in Natal, and the cry of the red-breast lark, also a native of that country, delighted our ears as we stepped out of the bush into the flat, and as we all had been carrying fearful loads, a vote for half a holiday met with general approval. But as there was no water about, we had to send back some boys to a pan we passed to fetch a supply. While they were gone, Paul, who had been sniffing suspiciously about some longish, green-bladed, coarse-looking grass in the neighbourhood, came back for the spade, and without attracting attention disappeared to the spot. Shortly after, he came for a calabash, which he brought back to us full of good water from a little well he had made by the grass. We of course went to look at the 'find,' and carefully noted the kind of vegetation, which had served Paul as an indication of water. It is a well-known fact among the Boers and travellers in the interior that water can always be obtained by digging for it in localities where this particular grass grows, which for that reason is called 'water grass,' and Paul's discovery was only an incident demonstrating this fact.

The Okavango boys were overjoyed at getting a good share of the wildebeest, and it was now principally owing to their assertion that there was no water for a long way ahead that we decided to rest for the day. This night lions roared around us frequently, but there was that in their tone that indicated only curiosity, and no desire to attack, so with good fires going all night we paid no further attention to them. What struck us as worthy of remark on these open flats, was the absence of tsetse fly, hitherto plaguing us at every camping ground until driven away by the smoke from our fires.

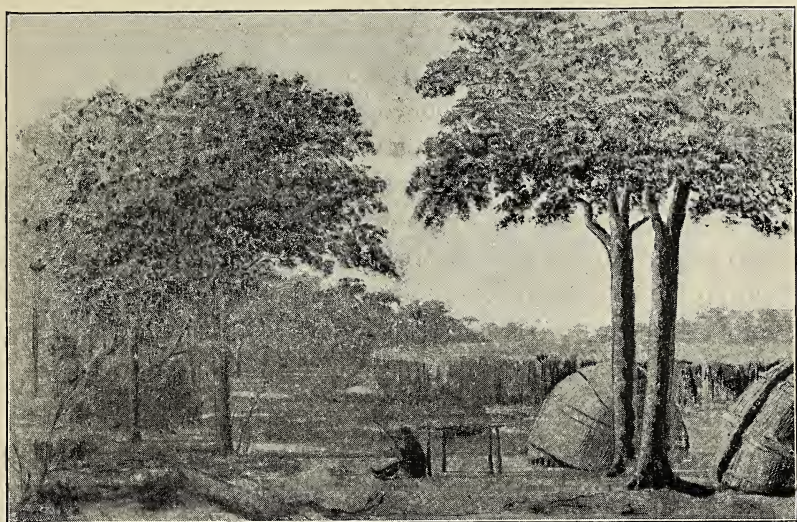
CHAPTER XVI

Sakoonima gets nasty—Watershed between Chobe and Okovanga—Arrive at small village of Okovanga people—Game very scarce—Hunt after wildebeest—Men from Kikonto's overtake us with message—Boy nearly kills himself with 'dacha' smoke—The effects of 'dacha' smoke—Makoyo, Debabe's nephew—Quagga hunt—Buffalo game—Native smithy.

NEXT day, before starting, old Sakoonima refused to move until we had paid him the goods promised for his assistance. To all our arguments he remained stolid, and simply sat by the fire sulkily bursting out into fits of temper, until we thought, to have the matter settled once and for all, perhaps it would be best to meet him in his demands, as beyond our word he had no guarantee that he would ever be paid. This settled, our early march of three miles in a westerly direction brought us to a fine pan of water, where we breakfasted in sight of much game overrunning the country, and then going in a north-westerly direction slightly south, for some miles, we came to a long open valley half a mile broad, with a distinct trend to the west. Further down this valley we came to a series of large pools of bluish water, evidently the beginning of some stream flowing westward. The spot where we breakfasted seems to be the watershed between the Okovanga and the Chobe. A total day's march of twelve miles brought us to a fine group of mabula trees, growing somewhat south of the valley containing the pools of water, and surrounding a beautiful grass-grown pool to which, from its nature, we gave the name of 'Sweet Water Pan.'

Here we camped for the night, and prepared our meal of mabulas in the native fashion by boiling a soup of them; and after a hearty meal, none the less enjoyable for the day's hard

work, we slept the sleep of the just, until next morning, when we again had a huge discussion with Mr. Sakoonima, who insisted that we should make over to him various other goods on the spot, otherwise he threatened to leave. He asserted that the



SWEET WATER PAN

payment made him the previous day was not a tithe of what he expected for the services he and his boys had rendered us so far, and appeared to desire a daily settlement, while we were under the impression that the payments made were in compensation for the whole journey to the Okovanga. There was something humorous about the whole affair that caused us to laugh good-naturedly at the idea of this old fellow, unjustly but determinedly, demanding goods from us, who could without any difficulty have mastered him in a moment. There was, however, the route to the Okovanga before us to be traversed, and that was a matter of no small moment to us. And after all, the things he got did not amount to much, from our point of view. Yet when I think of that hoary old rascal, and his grasping avarice, which he took the opportunity of displaying at every camp we made, and the presents we continually had to give him to keep

him in good humour, which, instead of propitiating him only increased his demands, till at last we fairly had to stop, and told him that he would not get another piece of cloth or brass wire until we had reached our destination, I often wonder why he escaped without a good serviceable thrashing. Our policy, however, pursued from the first, to only strike in self-defence, probably saved him from this extreme; but we subsequently decided that never again should such a rascal escape our hands without being given his quantum for such outrageous behaviour. But we also made up our minds never again to traverse unknown regions with such a pitiable small force for defensive purposes.

When harmony was restored by our 'shelling out' several more presents to Sakoonima, we started the best of friends again, and went on through open valleys and strips of trees for about six miles in a west-south-west direction, passing many pans of water on the road, until we reached a small temporary village inhabited by some of Debabe's people from the Okovanga who came to gather mabulas. We halted here to hunt for food, as our supply of meat was exhausted, and mabula soup is but poor stuff to work on.

Game, hitherto very abundant, was getting scarce in these sand belts, and I walked about four miles before meeting with anything; then I came upon four blue wildebeest. They saw me at the same time that I caught sight of them and were off, and I went after them, seeking as much cover while running as the thinly wooded country would afford. When next they halted, seven hundred yards intervened between us, and while I was trying to lessen the distance by a stalk they ran off again; but as everything depended upon our getting food I kept after them, and when next they stopped, about a mile on, I managed by keeping behind a friendly bush to get up to within five hundred yards. It was a long shot, liable to mistakes in the execution, but taking steady aim at one standing half side on, looking in my direction, I pulled, and then away went the troop. But, hold! only three of them, so I rushed up, followed by the three boys who accompanied me, and right enough the

beast fired at was stone dead. On cutting him up, we found that the bullet had expanded in the liver and had smashed that organ up into a pulp, strange to say without tearing the outer covering much, so that when we took it out, the fluid contents were held as in a bag and could be poured out.

It is one thing to shoot a wildebeest six miles from home, and quite another to transport the meat to camp amongst four of you including yourself. Knowing by the scarcity of spoor that game was getting very rare, and that therefore it was unwise to waste a particle of meat, I suggested to the boys that I would go home and send out more boys to help convey the buck home. But they were afraid to stop alone unarmed because of the fast approaching night, and also objected to go themselves for the same reason while I offered to remain. So there was no help for it. The beast was skinned and quartered; and taking a hind-quarter for my share and some other bits, which I hung over a stout stick and carried on my shoulder, supported crossways by the gun from the other shoulder, and bidding the boys pick up the rest, we started for home. The heavy weight soon told on the boys, so that I reached camp much in advance of them and sent boys back to their assistance. But becoming scared they had thrown away a considerable portion of the meat, and only brought in two remaining quarters between them. It was three days since the last meat was killed, and although not starving exactly, we had had nothing to eat but mabulas since the previous morning, so there was quite an ovation accorded to the meat-bearers on reaching camp.

On waking next morning we found that Franz had gone off after some quagga, whose shrill piping neigh had betrayed their proximity to our camp, but he returned shortly very sulky at not having shot anything. Here we all suffered much from eating too freely of the mabula fruit, which must contain some active constipating alkaloid.

The people in the temporary village here had goats and two common-looking yellow dogs with them, although four miles

back we had again encountered tsetse fly. We were overtaken here by three boys from Kikonto, who came up in the most friendly manner imaginable with a message that Kikonto wished us to return to the Chobe to give him the opportunity to explain



ONE OF
KIKONTO'S MEN

to us that there must be some mistake that caused the rupture between us, and if we would not return they volunteered for payment to help carry our things on to the Okovanga. However, if they came in the hope of having an easy time of it or of stealing, they were woefully mistaken, for we made up good packs for them by lightening the loads of our boys, and kept them well guarded during the march. Our boys also took charge of the spears, bows and arrows they carried, so that these fellows proved the only ones we ever engaged, except our own boys, who earned their pay honestly,—very honestly, let me assure the reader.

From the Okovanga boys in the village we purchased some beads made of circular sections of ostrich egg-shell.

Old Sakoonima arranged for two more boys from the village to assist us in carrying the loads, so I also resigned my pack with a sigh of thanksgiving, for the leather bands of the heavy knapsack had already furrowed the unaccustomed skin in front of my shoulders to the point of bursting.

After the usual row between old Sakoonima and ourselves before starting, in which Hammar kindly took the leading part by throwing some cloth as a present at the old fiend, a compliment returned with interest on the part of the old warrior, who angrily flourished his long metal pipe at what he considered an insult, and rolled out words perhaps it was as well we did not understand, until we had to simulate equal anger to check him. We got off at about 7.30 A.M., and crossed many open laagtes and tree-grown sand-belts, trending generally west-north-west, until by the afternoon we had made eighteen miles and camped as usual under mabula trees near a pan. A big day, but, now that the loads were lightened, not

excessive. During the march we came upon a Mosarwa camp under mabula trees, just deserted at our approach. Their miserable utensils and a few straw mats were lying scattered in the sand in the haste these poor beings made to escape with their more valuable weapons and skins.

On the following day our march continued over, first, a large open flat five miles wide, devoid of game, and then over a succession of sand-belts and laagtes, till after going fifteen miles in a west-south-west direction we came to a stockaded village belonging to one Makoyo, a nephew of King Debabe, or Indala, as he is also locally called, of the Okovanga.

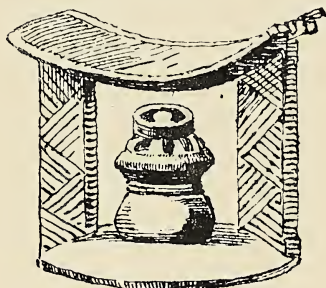
During the day we were somewhat alarmed for the life of one of the new boys, a young man, who, evidently unaccustomed to the use of it, had inhaled several strong whiffs of 'insangu' (*can-nabis indica*) smoke in rapid succession into his lungs from a native horn pipe while resting at mid-day. He fell over with his head in the sand and ceased breathing altogether, while his heart beat fainter and fainter, and his skin assumed the appearance known as 'goose skin' in a marked degree. We rolled him about and dashed water on his unconscious face for full ten minutes before he recovered, when in a dazed manner he stretched out his hand for another whiff at the pipe which was going the rounds amongst the boys. None of the boys evinced the least sympathy, or assisted at his revival, beyond hitting him once with a stick and calling his name. They only laughed, and I believe he would verily have died but for our assistance, for his lungs were entirely filled with smoke from the narcotic weed, which would have done its work effectually, but for being ejected out by the treatment we instituted.



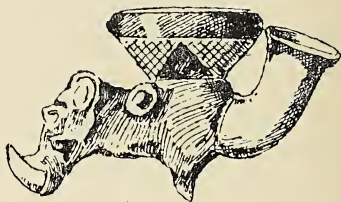
MAKOYO

The smoking of 'insangu' or 'dacha,' as it is variously called,

is a widely distributed habit throughout South Africa amongst the natives. The curved horn that forms the base of the pipe is generally filled with water to above the point of connection with the reed at whose top the clay bowl is situated, into which the dried insangu leaves are stuffed much after the manner of tobacco in a pipe. When lighted with a coal, the smoker curls



PILLOW



METAL PIPE-BOWL

his hands up into a mouthpiece at the opening of the horn in such a manner as to bar the ingress of outside air into the channel; and taking about a tablespoonful of pure water into his mouth, he inhales deeply at the pipe, thus draining the smoke from the bowl down the reed through the water in the horn; from which it emerges in lively bubbles to be inhaled full into the lungs with two or three mighty draws, between which the smoker exhales the smoke each time, until he takes the last draw, which he retains in the lung while he passes the pipe to his neighbour. The absorption of this alkaloid from the smoke in the lung seems to produce intense transient excitement of the brain causing the smoker to burst out into vaunting speech, rapidly uttered and interspersed with long-drawn yells of a most blood-curdling nature. His eyes roll wildly, and in these moments of exultation the rapidly working brain conceives wild ideas not infrequently put into execution later. To the effect of this smoke may be attributed many of the horrible crimes occasionally perpetrated by the natives. It is for this reason that the Whites who have natives in their employ on the plantations in Natal entirely prohibit the use of this

maddening weed amongst their servants. The boasting and yelling period over, the native grasps a thin long reed, through which he ejects the fluid still contained in his mouth, now of a dull blue colour from contact with the smoke, in a succession of little pearl-like bubbles, which he trains into circular shapes on the floor. All this time the pipe is circulating from one to another of the company; and it is no unusual occurrence for a smoker, fired into almost madness by the fumes, to spring up shouting like a demon, and go through the evolutions of a war dance, accompanied by the loud acclamations of his companions, who in their turn perform some equally excitable freak. From this pipe they gather inspiration in extreme moments, the warrior before battle, the hunter before proceeding after dangerous game, and the witch doctor for the execution of the intricacies of his profession.

Old Sakoonima informed us that near here, at Makoyo's, was his home, and that we would now part company. We found this to be a piece of political falsehood, or an excuse on the part of the old man to get rid of us, for he might have been put to some trouble by the king for bringing us into the country without permission, as he was an entirely unauthorised and irresponsible person. Native kings, with the inborn rapacity of their race, never lose an opportunity of fining a man for misdemeanours he may really have committed, or may be imagined to be guilty of. It is very difficult for Whites to form an opinion of what may constitute an actionable wrong amongst natives, or of what the liabilities are likely to be for an act that every sensible white person would consider perfectly justified and reasonable. However; the bringing in of strangers by a new route, involving at any rate the chance that the information might be carried away to some other king likely to make use of it, might cost the unwitting guide a punishment that would place him beyond the possibility of ever repeating the offence, nothing less than death. For a white man to forestall possible accusations one requires the wisdom of a Solomon and the imagination of a Jules Verne; but none of these qualities will ever serve to pal-

liate the actual rapacity of a chief, who will certainly get all he can out of every one concerned, if there is a possible chance of trumping up a charge against the unfortunate individuals who have given him the opportunity, no matter on what trivial score, to sit in judgment on their acts. Old Sakoonima was a wise man amongst his kind, and, with habitual caution, proposed to make himself scarce before getting into the clutches of his king. He also certainly cannot be accused of want of forethought in having neglected the opportunity to feather his own nest from our store of goods while the circumstances were favourable to the execution of his plans. However, he had served our turn thus far; so, spite of past disputes and ill-feeling, we bade him a friendly farewell, which seemed to call forth the better instincts in his nature, for with many grins and wishes for our future welfare he packed up and left.

Makoyo, a son of King Debabe's sister, is a young man of about twenty-five years of age, much lighter in colour than the usual native, and of exceptional intelligence. A great drawback to our conversation with him was the fact that he knew nothing of the Makololo or Setchuana language nor of any other but his native Mombokooshu. Franz had to talk to another interpreter who in his turn transmitted the words to Makoyo. What substance a conversation may lose or gain by this method, it is quite impossible for the uninitiated to believe. Each interpreter must be told the whole tale first, before he then translates the sense of conditions to the other man, with such additions or detractions as personal views on the subject may suggest, and then in the next transmission the message is liable to equal maltreatment before it finally reaches the ears of the man to whom it was intended to be delivered pure. However, Makoyo quite understood that it was polite to accept the presents we gave him. On that score we have no complaint to make. He also seemed to realise that we asked for food in return, but with regard to the quantity necessary, or even adequate, as a return present for the one pound cost price blanket and other goods we gave him, he seemed only to have the vaguest notion of compen-

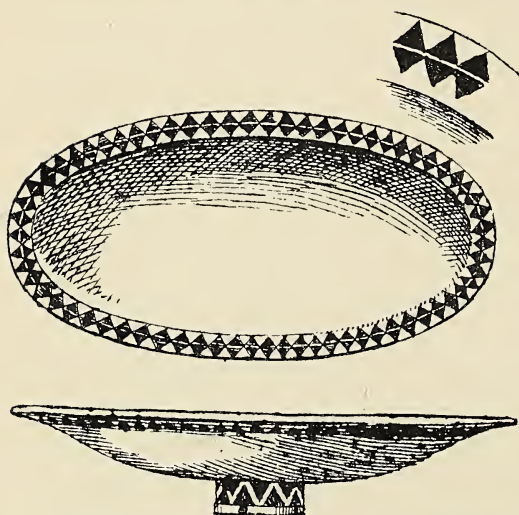
satory value, for the most optimistic mind could hardly declare that about threepennyworth of cooked beans, barely sufficient for one meal for Hammar and myself, was an equivalent doing justice to Makoyo's calculative powers and intelligence. When this inequality was thoroughly explained to Makoyo he with much dignified generosity referred us to the ubiquitous mabula-trees.

Meat was a *sine qua non* to the existence of our hard-worked boys, and up till very lately, it was only necessary to stick out a gun and pull the trigger to obtain the required supply. But in these inhospitable sand-belts, producing only poor grass, the game wisely kept away, naturally preferring to frequent the neighbourhood of running streams, along whose banks the richer grasses flourish in great profusion. Still I went out in search of any straying game that possibly might be in the neighbourhood, and acting on the hunter's axiom, that if you go on until you find something you are sure to meet with success, I went about eight miles south-west from camp before coming across anything, and then Chiki pointed out some moving objects nearly a mile away that could only be game. This was not the time for any recklessness, something had to be shot or we should starve. Carefully going into the points of wind, cover, etc., we made a *détour* to bring us into the most favourable position for a stalk, and came out unobserved to within half a mile of the troop, which now proved to consist of seven quaggas. On the open flat intervening between us there were only one or two scraggy little bushes to afford shelter for a stalk; so, bidding the boys wait, I threw myself flat on the sandy ground and wormed myself along to within three hundred and fifty yards, when it appeared that the quaggas were getting suspicious, for they pricked up their ears and stared about, stamping their feet, and might be off at any moment. A large mare offered the best mark, and her I singled out for a victim and pulled. But, bad luck to it, there was a damaged cartridge in the gun, and I had the mortification of seeing the bullet fall quite one hundred yards short in the sand, as the troop made

off in frenzied hurry, leaving a cloud of dust behind. But I was not finished yet, and hastily jumping up and adjusting the sight to five hundred, I let fly at the same mare, now leading the troop at a gallop half cross side on. A cloud of dust thrown up by the startled troop as they turned at the shot and made off in another direction was the only visible result of the shot, but as they filed off, I counted them and found the number short of one. My boys came running up much disappointed that I had not killed at the first shot, and seeing me only standing, wanted to know what was the matter. I directed them to go to the spot where the second shot was fired; but they would have none of this, and urged me to follow the troop at a run immediately. But as I insisted, they went to look with an air of dejection and disbelief at the spot where I knew the dead quagga lay, and shortly after I saw Chiki start at a run, and jump on to the body waving his spear in triumph.

This time, profiting by our last lesson against the carelessness about meat we had acquired on the Chobe, I had taken good care to have sufficient boys to carry in all that was shot.

Of course as soon as we reached camp Makoyo came to demand his share of the meat that 'his' country had provided, and also complained that Hammar personally had made him no present. With the patent fact staring us in the face that without guides we could never hope to find our way through these



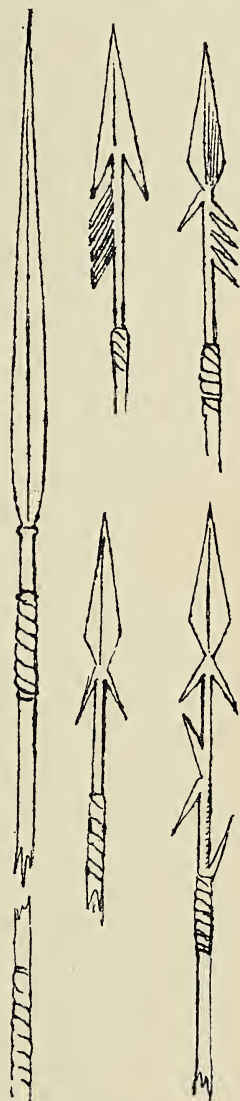
DRINKING-VESSEL AND PATTERN ON EDGE OF SAME

sand-belts to our destination, we favoured Makoyo with a shoulder of the quagga and another blanket and also a coloured

shirt, on condition that he should without fail supply us with guides and a few bearers to the Okovanga the following day, to which conditions he assented, apparently well pleased with the result of his negotiations.

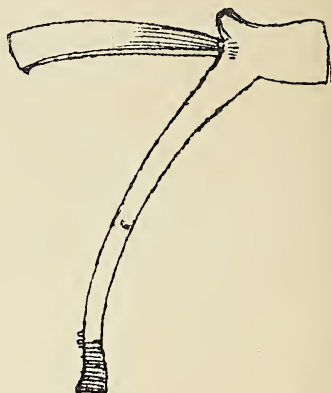
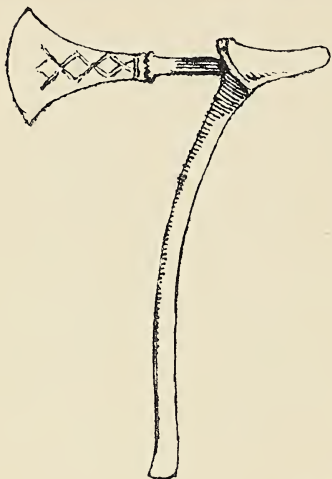
Compelled through want of other food to tackle the quagga meat, we carefully divested the fillet of every vestige of fat, which has a strong horsey smell, and baked the meat dry before a slow fire to get rid of the moisture it contained. When properly done we found the viand excellent eating, so good in fact that we agreed in future to incorporate quagga fillet amongst the edibles of our *cuisine* list.

Our boys, invigorated by feeding on the meat and a rest, in the exuberance of their spirits started playing the buffalo game; one man takes the rôle of hunter, and stalks up to another who is presumably a buffalo grazing near a tree that has a convenient horizontal branch about seven feet from the ground. The hunter with a click of his tongue and fingers simulates firing a shot at the buffalo, and then it is the buffalo's part to charge, and attempt to strike the hunter with his head, before he can climb into the branch. If he touches any part of the hunter with his skull before the other is out of reach, then the hunter in his turn is obliged to take the part of buffalo towards as many other hunters as care to join in the game. Of course the buffalo will try to take up a position as near to the tree as possible, but the hunter generally waits until the buffalo by receding a bit manages to draw his



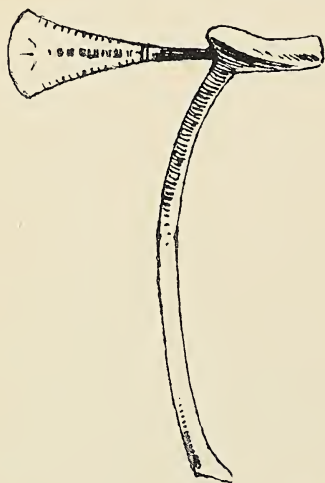
MOMBOKOOSHU SPEARS

fire, then the rush and scramble takes place. It is very amusing to watch the interest this game excites among the native lookers-



MOMBOKOOSHU AXES

on, who shout encouragement to either party during the various phases of the game: to the hunter they will shout, 'Shoot, now



MOMBOKOOSHU AXES

is your chance, he is far enough from the tree and you are safe. Ah, you have no pluck,' etc. etc., while the friends of the buffalo

encourage him to fantastic leaps in the attempt to strike the suspended climbing figure with his head. Both Hammar and I joined in the game, to the great gratification of our boys, who since the departure of the main column with Jan Veyers had by their good behaviour earned for themselves a relationship with us more akin to friendship than the position of servants.

Next day Makoyo, during a visit, informed us that he could not get the boys and guides we required till to-morrow, but hinted that a bar of lead and some powder to load his old flint-lock with would be acceptable. To keep up the feeling of friendship we gave him a few charges of powder and a bar of lead.

We paid him a visit inside of the stockade, attracted by the tinkling sound of hammering with iron tools. Makoyo was seated under a large mabula tree surrounded by his suite, one of whom was a blacksmith at work, shaping a piece of iron into a spear. The bellows were fashioned out of two hollow tree-trunks, standing side by side, about one foot in diameter and eighteen inches high; at the closed bottom of each of the cylinders was an orifice leading into a wooden nozzle that conducted the air current as near to the fire as was compatible with its safety. The air-current was caused by a loose flexible leather or skin top that was fixed round the upper outer edge of each of the hollow tree-trunks, without any valvular arrangement whatever. Each leather covering had a stick fastened to its centre, by which it was alternately raised dome-shaped above the cylinder below, and then depressed. While the one leather covering was raised, the other underwent a contrary movement at the hands of a boy who worked the bellows, holding one stick in each hand. As he pulled one up he dived the other down, thus forcing a pretty regular stream of air on to the charcoal fire. In addition to these bellows the smith had two hammers and a triangular anvil, let into a piece of wood for firmness. With these primitive tools the smith fashioned a very good spear, the hilt of which could be let into a hollow made in the end of a long stick that serves as shaft to this kind of weapon.

We were told that the iron the smith was using came from the north across the Zambesi, and that there were no smelteries in their own country, a fact borne out by old Sakoonima's trading journey into the Barotzi Valley for ironware—a circumstance of more convincing value than any assertion of the natives, whose custom it is, for reasons of their own, to answer all questions put by strangers by prevarication.

CHAPTER XVII

Thirst—Natives go down ant-bear hole for moist mud—Expedition eating their sandals from hunger—Franz scares away troop of wildebeest, fruitless chase after them, also after giraffe—Kill hartebeest—Lion injures boy in the night—Okovanga at last—Island in river—Meet Portuguese trader, Gonsalvus by name—King Debabe or Indala turns rusty—I interview King on island—He tries to poison me with beer—Franz demoralised.

ON August the 25th we got away from Makoyo with six extra bearers and guides he brought us, after we had parted with a few more trifles to him as presents, and made twelve miles in a west-by-north direction, through sand-belts and laagte as before. The new boys came on grumbling sorely at the necessity of carrying loads, and it was owing to their lagging behind that we had to camp in a sand-belt without water for the night. We had waited near some large trees for those following to come up, so that we could continue the march on to water, but as it was quite dark when they arrived, we thought it was unwise to proceed, being afraid that some of them might bolt with their loads. We suffered intensely from thirst, for we had made no provision for sleeping without water, by filling the calabashes as usual when we expected to camp in a belt. The boys got so thirsty during the night that some of them went off to search the neighbourhood for water, carrying firebrands as protection against possible lions lurking about. A shout in the distance induced us to walk over to where some of them had gone with our mess calabashes, when we were surprised to find two boys squatting on the ground holding the legs of one of their companions who had gone down head first an ant-bear hole in search of water below. By-and-by he gave a signal and was hauled up; but what was our astonishment to find when he was pulled out that he had hold of the legs of another boy, who in his turn brought

up a calabash full of wet mud that he had dug up at the bottom of the ant-bear pit. This moist earth was duly shared by the crowd, who filled their mouths and sucked such fluid out of the stuff as it contained, and then spat out the remaining sand. While the first lot were enjoying the moisture thus obtained, another cycle of boys took up the job, and so the night was spent by most of the boys successively in getting up the mud to wet their parched throats with. As for ourselves, although supplied with a calabash full of the moist earth, we preferred not to touch it, as it was accompanied by an unholy smell that savoured of decaying material like sulphuretted hydrogen, which we could not stomach.

The first march we made on the following morning, starting at daybreak, brought us to a large pan of water, where we halted to hunt for game, as we were out of food. But although we scoured the country in every direction, nothing was found, and the absence of spoor also showed that we were in a country free of anything worth shooting for food. The next day we marched thirteen miles on end in a south-west direction without seeing a single game track, and camped at night near a muddy little pan, that just supplied sufficient water for our wants. We were obliged to kill two of our few remaining goats, which served just to give a bite all round to the hungry boys.

Again we were off with sunrise, determined to march on until we came upon some kind of game spoor, and there to camp until something was killed. Things were getting desperate; the quagga meat had long been exhausted, and the only food the boys and ourselves had to eat during the last two days were two small goats and a few mabulas—poor stuff to march on. In fact, the boys were so hungry that they cast their spare sandals of buffalo hide into a pot of water and boiled them all night, and in the morning, before starting, hastily browned the flabby-looking product over the coals and devoured it with gusto. We also had our share of this meal, and, probably owing to hunger, found it quite palatable.

After going ten miles south-west we came upon a troop of

harris buck, but so wild that, although I kept after them at a run for five miles, I could not get within range at all. Much disappointed, I returned to the waiting expedition, which had found a beautiful pan of water close by. Wishing for a short rest during the heat of the day, with the intention of starting out hunting at about two o'clock, we lay down under the shady trees surrounding the pan at about midday and fell asleep, but not for long. Hardly thirty minutes had elapsed when we were awakened with a start by hearing a succession of shots bang, bang, banging away on the right; and, jumping up, found that Franz had gone off on his own account, contrary to instructions, in that direction, and that these must be his shots. Suddenly the thunder of hoofs could be heard approaching, and then from our right passing in front appeared a magnificent troop of several hundred blue wildebeest sweeping by in grand style. Shouting to my own boys to follow my track with plenty of water, I started on after the troop, and saw Franz running like a madman in their wake ahead of me. I shouted to him to slacken speed, but he seemed to have lost all control of himself and ran on, firing as he went at every favourable opportunity shot after shot driving the game to utter madness. He ran on for about three miles, and then in sheer exhaustion dropped on the ground, with not a shot of the twenty-five rounds of Martini-Henry cartridges he carried left. He had fired them all away in his anxiety to kill some meat, and had killed nothing. When I came up to him he was so perfectly done that he could not speak, and his face had the colour of dark red velvet, an appearance that led me to fear he had burst a blood-vessel; but all this was by the way and of secondary consideration for the moment. I shouted at him, 'Have you killed anything?' He shook his head in the negative, but indicated that he had wounded two by holding up as many fingers and pointing to his side. This news I got from him while passing, and shouting to him to send on water, I buckled-to to try and run down the wounded wildebeest. I was in full training and influenced by the thought of the hungry boys, so went mile after mile, but could see no sign of a wildebeest

flagging behind the troop that kept about a thousand yards ahead, and at last, after going two hours, I gave it up. Knowing that the faithful Chiki and his companions were on my track with water, and that it would be useless to hunt down this particular laagte along which the wildebeest had swept like a hurricane, I crossed over the sand-belt on the right to the next laagte, about three miles off, going slowly to recover my wind, but influenced by the determination to kill something before returning to camp. I reckoned to be about thirteen miles from camp, and as there were still two and a half hours of daylight, I felt there was still a good chance to find some game on my way homeward down the next laagte. Not far ahead three giraffes suddenly started out of some tall trees about four hundred yards off, and I, thinking that if a Bushman could run down this game it was worth trying a similar experiment, started off at a good run after them. Over the next sand-belt they went into another laagte, but try all I could with occasional spurts to get nearer, the distance between us would not lessen, and as it was approaching sundown, I again had to abandon the chase. Hardly knowing where I was or how far I had gone from camp, the only fact uppermost in my mind was that there was nothing to eat. I started down the laagte, intending later to cross back over the two sand-belts I had passed, but meanwhile to keep on the lookout for game while daylight lasted; and had not gone far when a beautiful little steenbok rose from some cover and stood looking at me from eighty yards' distance. I squatted down in my old favourite position and pulled almost instantly, not to give him a chance to be off. He bounded up at the shot, hard hit, and running twenty yards or less, turned clean over on his back from the velocity of his flight, dead. To run up and rip out his entrails was the work of a few moments, and immediately after I was stuffing the contents of his stomach in handfuls into my parched mouth to suck out the moisture, and then, hauling a few dry branches together, made a fire, and tearing off the skin, threw the carcass on to the fire to roast. I also heaped up part of the fire with green twigs, to make a column of smoke that should serve

as a signal of my whereabouts to the boys and save them the trouble of following all the deviations of my track, which had gone backwards and forwards in the chase. When the buck was about roasted I hauled him out, and, making an underlie of green branches, started to feed at a rate that soon left the two hind legs and backbone bare, and probably would have gone on eating had not my attention been attracted by the shouting of my boys, who, now it was growing dark, had lost the direction by not being able to distinguish the smoke, and could not yet see the fire in the laagte. Answering by a shot, they soon came running up, expressing the greatest delight at finding me, as they feared that I had gone so far that they would be obliged by darkness to give up the search till next day.

I handed the buck carcase over to them, and with a few hurried bites the meat was despatched, and we started for home after sharing the water they carried fairly amongst us.

On this hurried march home we were fortunate enough to blunder right into a pan of water that enabled us to still our raging thirst and fill the calabashes again for further use on the way. I have before mentioned that this dry atmosphere, coupled with heavy exertion, draws largely on the fluid substances of the body, so that after a hard running like the past, we found it necessary to consume such a quantity of water at the pan that it will hardly bear the strain of relating. For myself I should never have found the camp that night, as while running I had neither time nor opportunity to take any bearings, but the faithful boys, although following all the time at a trot, had by methods known only to themselves so securely located the spot, that all I had to do was to urge them on. We reached camp at 12.30 A.M. to find Hammar and the others in some consternation at our protracted absence, and, worse by far, that none of them had killed any game. This day I had been actually travelling seventeen full hours and had been running a good part of the time, so must have covered a deal of ground on this twenty-eighth day of August. I slept very little till four o'clock, kept awake by pain in the legs and over-excitement,

and then got up to go out hunting, intending to get beyond the limits of where the party had been skirmishing round the previous day before daylight, and hoping by taking the opposite direction from mine of yesterday, to come upon game that had not yet been disturbed by our party. My legs were very stiff and sore from the previous day's work, but I called up some of the boys, and made them rub my limbs down with their hands wetted with saliva, a kind of massage that soon put them in working order again.

When I called on the boys to follow me, none responded, but they all slapped their hollow bellies, which emitted a drum-like sound. So telling them it was their own fault if they got no meat, as I was not going to return till something was killed, I went off, and soon saw several of them get up by the firelight and follow.

I had gone about four miles by daylight, and, as the light grew, distinguished a single old wary sassaby looking at me from about five hundred yards distance. This being too far to risk a shot at, while there might be game in the vicinity which would let me approach nearer, and which I did not care to startle by a shot, I proceeded down the open laagte. But the old sassaby, trotting into the open trees lining the laagte on the south, kept his approximate distance, never attempting to fly, but, to my great annoyance, never letting me get any nearer. Several times, as I found a favourable bush to stalk up under, he quietly went on meanwhile, and when I looked he was the stereotyped five hundred yards away. We continued this game till the sun was already high in the heavens, and, seeing no other game, I made up my mind to try a shot at the next favourable opportunity. The sassaby at last climbed on to a mound, an old grass-grown ant-heap on the edge of the trees; and, as I sat down, he seemed to enjoy my discomfiture, for he turned about and looked contentedly in every direction. Judging him to be five hundred yards off, I waited till he was end on, to give me the advantage of any miscalculation in distance and consequent rise or fall in the trajectory of the shot, and then

pulled. When the smoke cleared there was nothing of him to be seen. One fact was certain, he was not running away anywhere; so, hurrying up to the spot, I found him lying behind the ant-heap, with his neck broken just above the shoulders—for I had slightly overjudged the distance—and his tail curling over his back, with the under-hair, that never had looked so beautiful before, spread out in the last spasmodic efforts of death. I yelled to the boys in the distance, and when they came up ordered that they should bring in every vestige of meat, letting them know that if they started to feed here, there would be an account to settle on coming home. With the liver slung over my gun I went home first, and found Hammar roasting over the fire two delicious ducks, that he had just shot on the pan. How we did enjoy our breakfast, which was continued into a regular feast when the boys came in with the meat, conscientiously bringing every particle with them! The meat was shared out to each group of boys that messed together, and then there was a scene of quiet, solid feeding that lasted for hours, marked by an unusual silence that showed how keen was their hunger. Chiki and the boys who had followed me yesterday were much disgusted with themselves because they had stayed behind to rest, a fact they were more than once reminded of by the others who had taken their place, which they threatened to maintain in future.

My legs, now they were at rest, pained me to such an extent that I could get no peace in any position for hours. The boys, however, massaged them with hot and cold water by turns, and this relieved the strain, till towards evening the pain was over. While I was out in the morning, the boys remaining behind went out and found a root they called mandarrara, which much resembled a coarse sweet potato in shape and flavour when baked on the coals, and proved a pleasant adjunct to our meal.

That night, when we were all fast asleep, with the fires burning low at our feet, we were waked by a most unearthly yell from one of the boys; and as we jumped up, the shout, 'Lions, lions,' came from every mouth. The boys climbed up the trees in a

very creditable manner, while those who had to wait their turn to climb, at the tree trunk that flanked our skerm, employed themselves by frantically waving firebrands about and yelling at the top of their voices to the others to be quick and climb up, as they were in a hurry to follow; they even seized the living coals in their hands and hurled them to the back of the skerm, where the lions presumably were hiding. We hurriedly kicked up the fires, and piled wood on to increase the glare, trying to see into the darkness where the lions were, but of course without success, as by this the turmoil and noise would have sent any respectable lion off with his tail between his legs. Paul was the only boy remaining on the ground, and he, Hammar, and I, with our guns in hand, could not help laughing at the ludicrous sight of our expedition, perched like so many aasvogels in the trees.

As soon as the row was over, we discovered that a lion had actually crawled up to the back of the skerm, and, while trying to get at one of the boys by cautiously parting the loosely plaited branches of the skerm, had put his paw on to the face of the boy, and tightened his grip as the startled native jumped up, inflicting deep scratches on his face and cheek, which required several stitches to sew them up. The whole affair went off so rapidly, and the terror of the boys was so extreme while it lasted, that with the reaction a chorus of hearty laughter set in. However, we kept up good fires for the rest of the night, and at daylight prepared for a start. With reference to the wounded boy, I should mention that his hurts healed excellently under antiseptic treatment. The reason I mention this is because lions' claws are considered to be poisonous, and wounds inflicted by them as a rule heal badly. This assertion is correct, inasmuch as lions, when feeding, tear the meat asunder by help of their claws, to which, in the course of this performance, minute particles of flesh adhere. The carcasses of game the lions feed on are often in a half-putrid state; therefore, besides the decaying process of small particles of flesh actually in progress on the claws, the original matter that defiles the claws is often already in a state of decomposition before it reaches this

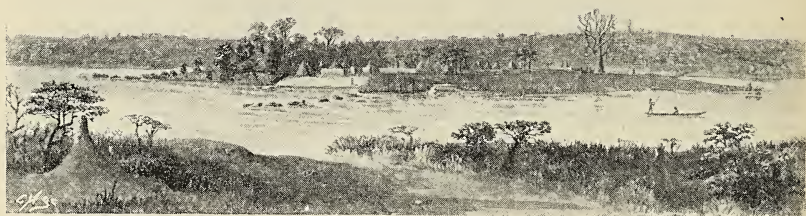
position. The introduction of such putrid matter into a wound on a living subject will naturally bring severe inflammation in its wake. Beyond this influence, one can safely affirm that lion claws are no more poisonous than any other indifferent object.

Subsequent events proved that a suspicion I had that it would have been wiser to remain here for a few days and feed up the boys and ourselves, and also make biltong, game being really plentiful, was correct. It was only owing to the proverbial ill-luck that always befalls hunters when food is scarce that we had been unfortunate in killing game here at the outset, and now we had meat, it would have been a very easy matter to increase the supply by a couple of days' hunting. But, spoilt as we had been by the amount of game on the Chobe, we had not yet quite learned the lesson of caution, and our expectations were satisfied that there would be a similar quantity of game on the Okovanga, whose banks we were now approaching, and that what we had met here was only the precursor to a repetition of the quantities of the game on the Chobe.

On the following day, August the 30th, we made fourteen miles in a south-westerly direction over several pure white sand-belts, overgrown with a vegetation of trees differing in character from what we had hitherto passed. The mabula trees became scarcer, and white-stemmed thinly leafed trees occupied the whole country. We came upon three giraffes feeding on tree tops on the way; but they were off before we got within range, and the party was too tired to follow them up. To us it seemed as if the country we were covering was rising slightly, a fact borne out by our finding no water in the belts and laagtes. The boys lagged terribly on the road, and while waiting for the stragglers, the on-coming darkness necessitated our camping in the middle of a sand-belt, without water, a fact we sincerely deplored, as it was Hammar's birthday, and the toast to his health had to be consumed 'straight' as it came from the bottle.

We slept without the usual skerm, as every one seemed too tired to trouble about it, and started early next day, making

eight miles before breakfast, through sand-belts, when the country seemed to rise suddenly in a wave, on the apex of which stood a large baobab tree, the first we had seen for many days. From this tree we caught a glimpse of the Okovanga river, flowing



FIRST VIEW OF THE OKOVANGA

rapidly through well-wooded banks in the valley below, about a mile off.

The sight of running water—bubbling, flashing, and curling in the beautiful sunlight—gladdened our very souls, after the weary seventeen days' tramp across the dreary sand-belts, and seemed to impart some of its wandering energy into our wearied natures, reviving our hopes and raising our spirits, as if by contagion we shared its joyousness. Some three miles up the river's course, we distinguished, by the turmoil of water, that a cataract had its existence there; and straight below us, on both sides of a large island, a mile in length, occupying the middle of the river, protruding rocks stemmed the course of the water, which whirled and surged past these obstacles with inspiring speed. Our satisfaction was heightened by the belief that we were the first Whites who had ever gazed on this glorious stream, and by the prospect of exploring it to its source without being hampered by obnoxious swamps like those on the lacustrine Chobe, coupled with the fact that we had reached Debabe the king, who, bearing an excellent character from Westbeeche's

report, would now help us on our journey, and that our troubles, so far as quarrelling with the natives was concerned, were approaching an end. The well-cultivated soil on the banks of the river also gave promise of liberal corn supplies, and altogether we descended on our way to the river in a very happy frame of mind.

We noticed, as we advanced, that the island in the river was thickly populated, and was covered from end to end by groups of huts, whose conical roofs, peeping out from the thick foliage, sent into the still air curling volumes of smoke, that gave an unusually civilised appearance to the neighbourhood.

It was with an undefined feeling of distrust that we learned from the natives, on camping under a group of large trees on the Okovanga bank, opposite the island, that the king, Debabe, or Indala, as I shall henceforth call him, that being his colloquial appellation, resided permanently on the island. Our previous experience of islanders had not been pleasant ones; and somehow we associated the idea of cowardly brutality with those whose circumstances made it necessary for them to seek seclusion in the protected isolation of islands.

The Okovanga river, here quite four hundred yards wide, running between the sandstone boulders that project from the bottom in dark, dangerous-looking masses just above our camp, assumes a quieter aspect below, where the water, still agitated from its contact with the boulders above, whirls along with a good four-knot current, and is very deep—over thirty feet, I should say. Below this, the river, with the exception of one or two cataracts, flows unbroken for about twenty miles, until it spreads itself out into the enormous swamps occupying the country for several hundred miles to the west and north of Lake Ngami, and rivalling, if they do not exceed, those of the Chobe in their extent.

Before we had fairly pitched our camp, a coloured trader from the West Coast, of partly Portuguese descent, came to us in great excitement at our arrival, very anxious to hear all we had to tell. He spoke a little broken English, which, eked out

by signs and occasional assistance from interpreters, enabled us to understand each other. His name was Gonsalvus, and to show his friendly intentions, he brought us some pistachio nuts and a little corn, telling us that the king was so stingy about food that he had the greatest difficulty in feeding himself while trading here for ostrich feathers. He also expressed his willingness to accompany us to Benguela on the West Coast, whence he had started on his trip here, recommending us to follow the Okovanga up to the affluent Quito, and then to proceed up the Quito to its source, and so on out to the West Coast. The natives here call this class of man 'Mambarri.'

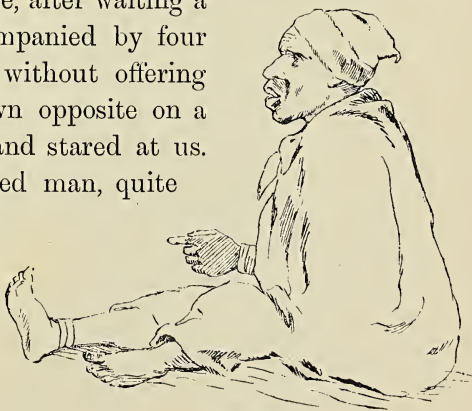
Conforming to the rule of the country, we sent a present to the king immediately on our arrival, consisting of powder, lead, shirts, blankets, beads, and brass wire. This was taken over to the island by one of the king's messengers, whom he had sent to interview us as soon as we came. Our hopes that the king would look upon this really liberal opening present with favourable eyes were short-lived indeed; for soon the messenger—a powerfully built, tall man about forty years of age, with the manners of a wild beast—returned, and, hurling the goods on the ground, contemptuously informed us that the king said these trifles would not even pay for the water we so greedily drank on reaching the river.

As all our future successes depended upon propitiating this king, we sent additional presents to the value of £20 cost price on the coast—more than he probably had ever seen at one time before—and waited. After a short time the man returned again; this time we were glad to see that the canoe that ferried him over did not bring back the goods we had despatched. He, however, brought about 10 lb. weight of corn from the king—to sell! It is usual for a king to supply his visitors with food free of charge, and we had conjectured that this potentate had, when requesting further presents, only sought to liberally cover himself for the outlay of corn and food it was proper form for him to supply us with. We bought the corn—and also several baskets more that were brought to us by some other Mombokooshus, subjects of

Indala—for red oval beads with a white eye. They refused to barter for any other beads. They also sold us a pumpkin for a charge of powder; but we were very chary of dealing in this article, for if once it became known that we used powder as a marketable article, we were well aware that the natives would refuse to sell for anything else, and our supply was limited.

On the morning of September 1st, the messenger came from the king to request my presence on the island. Of course there was no alternative but to go; but Franz, whose pluck had oozed out from his anatomy, was in a terrible state of mind at accompanying me. In vain I told him to put a bold front on matters, as any child might see the state of mind he was in; but he kept up his scare, much to the delight of the king's emissaries, and, with an air of one who is going to execution, entered the canoe in which we were ferried over. I had a good Colt's frontier pistol revolver hidden under my jacket in case of emergencies, and when we landed on the island took exact note of several canoes tethered to the shore, expecting, perhaps, that the king might endeavour to levy blackmail before allowing me to return, in which case I intended to enter a canoe by force, if necessary, and paddle over to the camp.

We were guided to a roofed hut without walls, and told to sit down in its shelter, where, after waiting a few minutes, the king, accompanied by four of his staff, came up, and without offering any greeting quietly sat down opposite on a mat placed ready for him, and stared at us. He was a finely proportioned man, quite six feet in height, thirty years old, with a rather expressionless-looking face, added to a copper yellowish complexion: he had a slight stammer in his speech, and a quick, nervous manner. He goes attended by his head men, one the



INDALA

messenger that came to us on our first arrival, who advise him in everything. The principal of his attendants does the talking, and is always addressed on behalf of the king, as it is not etiquette to address his Majesty directly. On my attempting to greet the king, I was told to hold my tongue. While we looked at each other without passing a word, one of the king's pages brought two flat wooden dishes of beer. The one he handed to me, and the other to the king, who told me to drink. I personally gave the king to understand that the usual custom of tasting the beer had not been complied with, by pointing to the boy and holding the vessel towards him; for poor Franz, whom I told to mention the subject, was so utterly demoralised with fear that all he could stammer in a hoarse whisper was, 'Drink, baas, drink. Oh, don't offend the king!' As I would not drink without the beer being tasted first, I set it down, when the king kicked the vessel over with his foot, spilling the contents on the floor. He must have had reasons of his own for not ordering the boy to taste the beer at my request; probably it was poisoned.

I then compelled Franz to ask the king why he had sent for me, a question that had to go through three interpreters before it reached his ears. The message had to travel from Makololo to Mashubia, Mashubia to Mombokooshu, and then, as it was not etiquette to address the king directly, the message was passed to his 'talker,' who cringingly conveyed its meaning to the king, and who also received all the 'words of wisdom,' as Indala's utterances were grandiloquently styled, in return, and passed them on to me by the same devious channel through which my words had previously travelled.

After this request had been duly passed on and apparently understood, the king demanded to know my nationality, asking at the same time if I was not a Boer. The answer that I was English seemed in no way to better affairs. Then Indala, who of course had been informed by his spies of our conversation with Gonsalvus, warned me against the Mambarri, and authoritatively told me to have nothing to do with him and to go nowhere with him, as he would certainly lead us into trouble.

The people higher up were enemies to all white men, he said, because a white traveller there had shot a native chief in a dispute, and since then the route was closed. He offered to sell cattle, but had no ivory or feathers. Whenever I tried to speak, the 'talker' insultingly ordered me to be quiet and listen. Much annoyed at last, and not by any means crediting Indala's words, I got up abruptly, and calling the startled Franz to follow, walked off to the shore with a nod to the astonished king and his suite as farewell; and had got possession of the canoe we came over in before the canoe-men were well aware of my intentions, and ordered them to row us home. Thus ended the visit. Hammar and I endeavoured to patch up a connected line of thought from all that had taken place, but beyond arriving at the certain fact that this king was unfriendly to us there seemed no data to form a conclusion from.

CHAPTER XVIII

Indala takes our goods—No food—Palaver with our boys—Discover a horse on the island—Indala's treachery and murder of Van Zyl—Our brave boys—Women bring us food at night—Obstacles to our crossing the river—Consider what to do—Hammar tries to shoot Indala—Native juggling—The bar of lead tradition—Franz lied somewhere.

IN the morning Indala came to visit us at our camp, under pretence of selling us a cow. He asked to see what goods we had to barter with, and on displaying some blankets, beads, and linen, he ordered the men accompanying him, one of whom was the messenger whom we met on our first appearance, to walk off with the lot, a joke they hugely enjoyed, as they cleared away the goods. When asked about the cow, he said she would be coming to-morrow. Indala sat at our camp for several hours asking for things, but seemed afraid to come nearer than about twenty yards from the skerm, where he squatted, feasting on fish and drinking beer the greater part of the time, but never offering us a mouthful. In the vain hope of propitiating him, we gave him many little odds and ends that took his fancy, and begged to be ferried over the river, as we thought it more advisable to go up the opposite bank, judging from the nature of the country, and the descriptions given us by natives of the topography ahead, that there were likely to be fewer affluents running into the Okovanga from the south than was the case from the north, which would require fording in our upward course,—a most undesirable fact, as we, without a boat of our own, would be at the mercy of every fiddling little chief at the crossings, who would certainly use the opportunity to blackmail us.

To-morrow Indala would attend to all our wants. To-morrow he would 'call again' to talk over our affairs with us. To-morrow!

Later in the day our sixteen boys, evidently influenced by the fear of journeying so far from home, came in, pretending to give credence to the tales they heard of hostile natives ahead, and said that they were afraid to go any further; but I managed to quiet them by reminding them that, whatever happened, I had promised to see them safely home again, and this, they must take my word for it, should be done. In justice to ourselves, I must here relate the plan we had resolved on with regard to their future welfare. Should we reach the west coast in safety, they were to accompany us by sea to Natal, and then, under a good escort I intended to provide, they should be sent to Khama at Shoshong, with a message from me to allow them to proceed to their own homes, only three hundred miles distant from Shoshong, and with plenty of food and presents to gladden their hearts on returning home. In fact, Hammar volunteered to see them to Khama's personally, failing a good opportunity to send them up, while I was to proceed to Europe on other business.

The boys had a most touching faith in us, brought about, no doubt, by the constant association with us, and the forethought we always exhibited for their welfare, sparing no pains to shoot meat for them, and always sharing fairly every bite we had in hard times. After our talk they said, 'Go your way, "Kolwani," (my native name), you know best, we follow,' and there the matter ended.

The Mambarri offered to barter a pack-ox to us, which we were very anxious to have; but his price was so high, and he valued our goods at such an extraordinarily low rate, even if priced for the inferior class of goods he was accustomed to traffic in at coast prices, that we could not deal.

Our boys had been much interested in watching a strange-looking, white animal, too large for a donkey, and yet having no horns, grazing on the extreme far end of the island. On asking us what beast it could be, my telescope soon settled the question, it was a veritable horse. How came this beast here? The significant tale told later gave the explanation.

There was a certain Boer, the son of old Van Zyl, who lived

and hunted in the neighbourhood of Ngami for elephants, to whom in the course of years Indala sent many messages that he should come up the Okovanga, 'Cubango' (native) to him, and hunt for ivory on shares with him. Induced by two tusks and the friendly messages Indala sent to him, young Van Zyl trekked up with his wagon and a cart, bringing his wife and young child with him, and the horse now grazing on the island to hunt the elephants with. Indala received him kindly, and also made great friends with his half-breed Hottentot driver, whom he treated with unwonted liberality. Van Zyl drew his wagon and cart up close by, on the south bank of the Cubango, and when all the friendly preliminaries were over, and the agreement made about elephant-hunting, that Indala should have the tusk that fell nearest the earth, of each elephant killed, the usual arrangement when hunting on halves with a king, Indala induced him to hunt on the north bank of the Cubango, with tales of vast troops of elephants supposed to haunt that country. The horse was ferried over, swimming between two canoes, and when it was properly rested on the other side, the unfortunate Van Zyl, accompanied by the Hottentot as gun-bearer, and many of Indala's hunters, proceeded into the sand-belts we knew so well, to look for elephants. While riding along, he found himself suddenly deserted by all the natives, and left alone with the Hottentot who was carrying his gun. On consulting with the Hottentot what this desertion might mean, the man cocked the gun and ordered him from his horse, saying that he was going to shoot him, and that as it was a white man's custom to pray, he must now pray to his God before death. Utterly astounded and unarmed, Van Zyl at first thought the man was joking, but realising at last that he was in earnest, asked the reason of this turn of affairs, when the Hottentot told him that Indala had ordered him to kill his master on pain of being killed himself, and also told Van Zyl that the king had offered to share his goods with him. He then shot Van Zyl through the head, and, taking his clothes and horse, returned to the river, where he was ferried over. Mrs. Van Zyl, seeing the Hottentot

returning alone, dressed in her husband's clothes, instinctively divined that there was something wrong, retired into the wagon with her baby, and armed herself with a shot gun. The Hottentot came up and brutally told her that she was now his wife given him by the king, and detailed the events of her husband's death to her, ordering her out at once. The distracted woman threatened to shoot the man if he attempted to come near her, and sat nursing her child while daylight lasted. The Hottentot, who meanwhile got out of range of her gun, told her that he was only waiting for the night when he would come and fetch her, now his wife, out of the wagon at his leisure. Towards evening she lit a candle, and then as the Hottentot came near she dropped the burning light into a cask full of gunpowder, which exploded, killing her, the child, the Hottentot, and several natives who had approached to see the fun, as well as smashing the wagon, cart, and most of the goods to atoms. Indala kept the horse.

This terrible tale told to some of our boys at night, by some Mashubia women living amongst the Mombokooshus, who had clandestinely visited our camp to ask for news from their country, opened anything but a reassuring prospect for the possibilities of our future here. We found ourselves in a considerable fix. Go back I was determined we would not, and if we could only ford the river before us, I felt that we would make a fight for it in case of unpleasantness arising, knowing that, if we only got a fair chance, the Mombokooshus would have cause to reckon the cost of wiping us out before we were beaten. Our main precaution must be against treachery, not from our own boys, for they were tried metal, and not to be got at. Chiki, Paul, Styrman, Sjamboke, and several others, opportunely came to me and quietly said, "Kolwani," we have weapons, and are sharpening them, you watch and see if we do not have them ready for these people who hide at night in the river like fish. We, of the Swangi nation, know how to fight when our lives are at stake.' These brave fellows laughed the fears of Franz to scorn, and kept up a cheerful humour in our camp that was

most necessary to impress Indala and his people with a sense of our security. They also spread a tale of a mysterious power we derived from the stars, probably brought about by Hammar's taking observations with the sextant at night; a tale not wasted on the superstitious fears of the Mombokooshus, and probably strengthened by the display of utter indifference we assumed to all Indala's maltreatment. We also kept up the spirits of our boys by the humorous way in which we laughed and talked about the danger the poor natives were in if they only were foolish enough to attack us. This simulated security exercised a strong check upon the impudence of the Mombokooshus, who only came near us when their king, who bore the reputation of being a great magician, was present, and departed as soon as he left. They all seemed to fear us but the friendly Mashubia women, who secretly brought us corn at night in exchange for beads, under promise that we would not betray them to the Mombokooshus, who now had decided to let us have no food whatever, and who would probably kill them for infringing the order given by the king.

How these plucky old dames managed to escape the observation of their masters on the island at night, and, with heroic temerity, ferried themselves across the rapid stream in their cockle-shell canoes was a wonder to us, as much as it is still a wonder, whether they were actuated by humane reasons, or were influenced only by an avaricious desire for the much valued beads to take the fearful risk of being discovered.

However, they were cautious never to approach our fire so that they might not be seen, but hid some fifty yards away from camp amongst the bushes, where they gave a little chirping signal our boys understood; and then one of them, taking a string of beads placed, handy for the purpose, would go out, concealing an empty bag under his blanket, and effect the exchange unobserved behind the convenient bushes, where he left the bag, now containing the corn, until the safety of the good dames was assured. The corn was then fetched in and cooked inside the skerm, in a position excluding a view of the pots

from outside; while the fire, kept going all night in any case, did not excite unusual attention, and before daybreak the mess was passed along, when each of us had his feed.

It puzzled the Moinbokooshus greatly to see our full bellies and cheerful faces when they came in the day; and this little circumstance served greatly to amuse our boys, who laughed in the faces of the natives at the idea of white men or their people ever being in want of food when we had our 'magic' hidden in the skerm. It was probably owing to this unexplained circumstance and to vague possibilities of a repetition of what Van Zyl's wife had done with the powder-keg that Indala refrained from laying violent hands on our goods. We had told him pretty plainly that if he demanded a gun, or insisted on obtaining ammunition, we at once would look upon this action as a sign that he intended open enmity. So in future, though very nasty, he confined himself to begging for other goods; but as soon as anything was laid before him for inspection he immediately seized it, although the intention had been only to show these things to him for approval, in hopes that the sight of them would induce him to ferry us across the river in exchange for obtaining the goods.

We cared little for these inroads on our supplies, for the miserable fact was only too plain that amongst the natives the goods, instead of buying friendship, only aroused their cupidity, and gave rise to ill-feeling instead of purchasing assistance. Therefore the sooner we were rid of the whole lot the better, if only by forfeiting them we could gain the much desired object of crossing the 'Cubango.' With our guns and ammunition left, we could shoot as much game as ever we required, and with light loads and lighter hearts make a succession of rapid marches, halting now and then in good game districts to make a supply of biltong. With a stock of twenty pounds of this commodity to the share of each man we could travel ten days, if need be, without further food, and surely in that time something would chance to run against a bullet from one of our guns. The few bags of powder still in reserve we would keep

to purchase corn at intervals on the way, and thus we would reach the West Coast, passing obnoxious chiefs and the natives before they had time to calculate the chances of our appearance or the probable cost of interfering with us. This is the way to explore in the interior where game is to be had; only, one requires a somewhat larger force than ours, and perhaps a few pack-oxen at the start to carry the heavier ammunition well into the wilds before they succumb to fly-bite; then each man can take his share of the loads of ammunition, which should be equally distributed amongst them, and the rest is all plain sailing.

But to bring in the best class of goods to be made sport of by every miserable thief of a chief one meets, we declared such an utter error that we were sure of never making the same mistake again. Thus we laid out our plans for the future by the fireside at night.

Of course the first principle influencing a white man travelling through unknown country should be one of absolute peace. Peace throughout, never touching any of their fields, crops, women, or goods. Where they will not trade at once for corn, it is better to pass cheerfully on, trusting to the hunter's guns for food. A good supply of meat, besides satisfying one's hunger, is also the most useful article to barter corn from the natives with; for they are very indifferent hunters themselves with their miserable weapons, and will always freely barter corn against meat, food for food, for they have the same craving for a change of diet that one fed on meat alone also experiences in a large degree.

Once across the river and all is well, was our motto. Franz, whose courage had fled, was utterly disregarded by us now, and Paul instituted as interpreter in his place during the succeeding palavers we had with the Mombokooshu king, who under some pretext or another kept us waiting from day to day, till Hammar, whose patience was quite exhausted, advocated taking stronger measures. He suggested that we should seize some canoes, and with the help of our boys, who were all good boatmen, ferry ourselves over at night; and with this object we tried hard

to get possession of any small canoe with which our boys could steal over to the island in the night and bring back some of the large canoes tethered there. Naturally there was a risk attached to the execution of this plan, but the daily worry, seeming to end in nothing definite, caused us to look upon this move with considerable favour. But our efforts were vain, for the Mom-bokooshus took care that all the canoes were safely over at the island before they retired to rest at night. There was a mysterious inexplicable something pervading the spirit of our palavers with the king, which like a hidden thread eluded our intelligence, but yet was sufficiently pronounced at times to give us hope that an alternative of some kind or other would present itself soon. It was not alone the daily promise of Indala that 'to-morrow' we should be ferried over the river, nor solely the desire on my part to first try every means of effecting our purpose peacefully, but an instinctive inference that Indala was not doing his worst against us, that some inexplicable motive held him back from simply helping himself to all we had without any further trouble. That his desires influenced him to do this there could be little doubt, for he raved about the neighbourhood of our camp, backed by his swarthy messenger and other chiefs, in a manner that led us to keep our guns loaded and packed in a corner of the skerm ready for use.

Hammar's patience was fast wearing out, and on the 3rd of September, while Indala was sitting drinking beer, as usual, under the shade of a tree some thirty yards off, and coolly sending off one after another of our articles that we proffered as payment to be ferried over, occasionally losing his temper because we did not shell out fast enough, I noticed a fixed look come over Hammar's determined face, as he quietly went to the skerm and returned with his revolver. Hardly crediting that he was going to adopt extreme measures without pre-arrangement with me, but noticing the cold look on his face that had never been there before, I quietly stepped alongside of him, as he walked up to within three yards of Indala and raised the

revolver to shoot him. A moment more and Indala's fate would have been sealed, but I laughingly put my arm over his shoulder, quietly but firmly grasping his arm, and spoke to him gently to desist, as the time was not ripe, and we were all unprepared for a fight. My arguments prevailed, and richly as the scoundrel deserved the avenging bullet, if only for Van Zyl's sake, Hammar quietly took my cue and turned the matter into a jest. Fortunately neither Indala's people, nor he, knew the exact nature of a Colt's frontier revolver, or, if they did, they showed no sign of either fear or excitement over the event, but asked what strange instrument it was that Hammar carried. Wishing to put matters straight I extracted the cartridges, and handed him the weapon to examine, telling him it was one of our toys, a thing we played with, as the clicking of the lock would testify. The avaricious scoundrel immediately handed it to one of his henchmen, and told him to take it away. A suspicion arose in our minds that Indala perhaps knew the nature of the weapon, for when he rose later he pointed his finger at Hammar and said quietly, 'You are a bad man.' If he really was aware of the danger that threatened him he certainly displayed a strength of nerve and stoicism that did his courage infinite credit. However, we heard no more of this episode, and the matter dropped. This day Indala went off with our last piece of linen, a roll of very fine texture reserved for especial gifts to the harem ladies of any chief whom we might have been fortunate enough to make friends with in the interior, a hope long ago dissipated by the repulses we had always met with at the hands of the chiefs.

An amusing episode happened during Indala's visit early on this day. Some one had stolen Franz's pipe, at which he was in sore distress. One of the Mambarri's men offered to recover the lost article and to expose the thief for the price of a knife, which he proceeded to do by means of four green leaves that he threw on the ground before Indala's party and smelt at successively, making remarks as he passed each leaf. At last appearing satisfied, he went away some twenty yards, and squatting

on the ground went through various antics, whistling shrilly all the time; then suddenly, with a leap and bound, appeared before us with the pipe in his hand, pointing to the head messenger, our pet aversion and Indala's chief abettor in robbing us, as the delinquent. The accused scowled in a very foolish manner, and there was silence in the crowd for a time. Probably the Mambarri man had observed where the thief had concealed the pipe, and by re-stealing and hiding it had seized the opportunity to mystify the natives, and impress them by a demonstration of his powers. The result of all this day's dealings was that the king promised firmly that to-morrow we were to cross.

Towards evening his messenger came carrying a bar of lead we had previously given the king, with the request that I personally should divide it in two halves lengthwise, a strange request that I ordered Franz to carry out; but the messenger very excitedly insisted that I should do it with my own hands, a matter easily accomplished by splitting it over the sharp edge of an axe. With this the messenger retired satisfied. Our boys explained this circumstance by saying that this was a native method of testing if there was a possible part of the bar of lead that would kill the man who had to split it in half. Should the operation not succeed, well, then, the bullets made from that bar would be of deadly effect on his person, and the natives would be safe in making an attack.

On such trumpery circumstances as this, one may say, often hangs the fate of a human life amongst these savages; the actual part of the killing troubles their consciences but little, so long as the deed is fraught with no danger to themselves.

This night we were on the particular *qui vive*. Our boys were all of one opinion with us that things had reached a climax, whether for good or evil we knew not, but felt that there was some meaning in the manner the king had said the words, 'To-morrow you shall cross for certain.'

Fortunately it was glorious moonlight, and we took watch by turns, but beyond a small canoe paddling over to our side,

bringing the usual old Mashubia women with corn, nothing unusual occurred. While asleep under the tree a dead branch fell endways on to Hammar's chest, which he mistook for an assegai hurled by some unseen foe, and without moving and hardly awake, he coolly said, 'Schulz, I've got it at last.' In sitting up, however, he realised his mistake, and said he thought it strange that an assegai should not have hurt more.

At daybreak we were all up and ready to cross, when we heard Paul accusing Franz under his breath of something he had done that we could not fathom. The chance words we heard were, 'Franz, you have told a lie, and a lie is a bad thing.' Whatever it was, although we felt certain that it concerned ourselves, Paul was too staunch to tell, and Franz kept a frightened silence that proved beyond doubt he was guilty of some wrong. In spite of all our anxiety to know, we never found out what the cause was; nor even months later, when I questioned Paul under the promise of strict secrecy, would he confess what caused him to accuse Franz of lying. Yet we knew the lie materially concerned the welfare of the expedition. The most likely solution to this mystery is that Franz had said at the outset that we were Boers. We discussed the position from its various points, and subsequent events led up to the fact that the Boers were much disliked by the natives, and probably to this statement we in part owed the ill-treatment which Indala had meted out to us in the double fear that we were here as spies to investigate the Van Zyl affair, and to explore a hitherto unknown route into his country.

CHAPTER XIX

The Boers on the trek to Damaraland settle accounts with a native chief who molested one of the party—Our party to a man refuse to accompany me across the Okovanga when the canoe arrives—Paul volunteers—Strange people visible on the opposite shore—Mombokooshus ferry us over—The expedition follows with glee—Canoe men display dexterity in sport—People from Lake Ngami—Advise us to go to the lake—Intuhé has dispute with Debabe, Indala's nephew—Indala the wizard levies tribute from the lake people—We are under suspicion of being spies, and are obliged to go to the lake—Breaking-in pack-oxen—I give farewell advice to Indala—About the Mombokooshus.

THE Boer trek of 1879, led by the enterprising Smidt and Kreeling, which came from the Transvaal *viâ* Shoshong, Lake Ngami, and made its way into Portuguese territory and Damaraland, certainly had a terrifying effect on the natives; and, although they never visited Indala's district, the reports of their doings with some of the natives who interfered with members of the trek had reached the Cubango chief, probably causing him many severe moments at the recollections of his misdeeds and their probable consequences. It appears that, while the trek was proceeding to its destination, some hundred miles south-west of Indala, a chief living in that neighbourhood molested a Boer hunter whom he found shooting alone. Five of the Boers, well mounted and armed, paid this individual a visit to settle accounts for the transgression, and the country being fairly open they had such an innings with their long Martini-Henry rifles at these natives that they left the tribe over one hundred men short in the number of their mess, beside knocking the fear of Hades into the remainder, who at last fled like game over the country, followed by their relentless pursuers, till darkness put a stop to the proceedings. Whenever the natives rallied and made an attack on these five men, they calmly fired

at the advancing blacks until they came close enough to make things uncomfortable, and then, mounting their horses, retired about eight hundred yards, where they again dismounted and poured in a fire on the advancing enemy so destructive that these bolted, to be followed up in their turn by the Boers, who relentlessly pegged away at them all day, marking the time to suit their own convenience with such cool accuracy that the natives, bewildered, perplexed, panic-stricken, and shot, without being able to get at their avenging assailers, were at last exhausted, and fairly sat down to it. The number killed was only regulated by the quantity of ammunition the Boers found it convenient to expend on them, for they only rode off to rejoin their trek when their ammunition was exhausted.

Probably the trek Boers had never heard of Van Zyl's fate, for, though a Boer, he had no connection with them, being simply a hunter on his own account. Otherwise it might have been bad for Indala.

Franz, who had been deeply in confab with Paul during the morning, at last came to us with the suggestion that it would be better for us to make for Lake Ngami, and told us he was unwilling to go anywhere else, a matter of little moment at the time, as he and the bearers would simply have to follow us; for their own safety lay in accompanying us, and we felt no uneasiness on that score. What interested us a good deal more was the arrival of a phenomenally large canoe, capable of taking all our goods over at one time, manned by two majestically tall stout boatmen whom we had not seen before.

I noticed a commotion amongst some of our boys as we started packing the things into the canoe, and inquiring into the cause of their excitement found that they were watching something on the opposite river bank with much interest. With the telescope I soon discovered what the matter was: there were two men in European clothing watching the bank, and a nearer inspection revealed the fact that they were black. What people could these be? None of the Mombokooshus had been seen with clothes on before, and in fact they had no sources to pro-

cure them from. Recollections of Van Zyl's scoundrelly servant did not explain the matter either, for he was blown up with the general wreck of the explosion. There was nothing for it but to wait till we got over to solve the question; so, putting all the most valuable articles, carefully distributed with regard to the balance, etc., into the canoe, we arranged that I should cross over first in company with Franz, while Hammar, who kept his blankets and five hundred rounds of ammunition with four guns, should remain behind, and in the event of anything going wrong with me while crossing was to follow the left bank of the Cubango to the junction of the overflow into the Chobe with the remaining boys, and make his way to Panda Matenga.

The two canoe men watched our proceedings impatiently, and appeared anxious to be off, a fact that caused the last remnant of spirit to desert the miserable Franz, who flatly refused to accompany me in the canoe, and started bemoaning and bewailing his fate with an ashen-grey colour under his yellow complexion that showed he was quite demoralised. Upbraiding him for his cowardice, I called on the boys to give him an example, but fear is contagious, and the clothed men on the other side were a factor not in their previous reckoning; so, instead of jumping up, one and all, to volunteer as I expected, they avoided looking me in the face, so that I should not call one by name, and remained silent. For this I blame them not at all. It was not their place to take the lead: they had come together from one kraal or country, and the possibility of being led back by Hammar to where they had started from was too alluring a picture, thrown into the balance against the dark possibilities of the attempt to cross the river. Foiled in this, I called them each by name, and when I came to Chiki he started as if electrified, jumped up, and then sat down again with his head between his knees, and murmured that he, like the rest of them, had promised to remain with his mates. I could see that it cost him a hard battle to refuse me, and knew that at my second bidding he would come, but I rejected the strain of testing him too severely.

Hammar was, of course, only too anxious to join me, but that did not accord with our plans, for if by any premeditation harm should come to me, as Franz assured us was intended, then Hammar still would have a good chance to carry back such information as we had gathered; therefore it was not advisable that we should attempt the passage together. It was necessary, however, that two men should cross in case anything went wrong, for it was advisable to have a man each to watch the two boatmen lest they attempted any tricks on the passage, a not unlikely possibility, as they were apparently picked for abnormal size and strength from amongst their already over-sized compatriots.

While I was arguing with Franz, telling him how ill his conduct would appear amongst the hunters at Shoshong unless he behaved better, Paul rose, and stretching himself, with a laugh said, 'I have been waiting to see who are cowards and who are men. Baas, I can't swim, but will go with you; come on!' Giving him a loaded gun, I put him in one end of the canoe and took a seat at the other far end, so that we had the canoe men between us in the body of the canoe; telling Paul to keep his gun cocked and to shoot the man in front of him without hesitation at the least suspicious move, being prepared to do likewise in my own case, we shoved off into the rapid eddying current.

The boatmen, evidently impressed with the danger of their position, worked steadily along, but in their over-anxiety took us too near a jutting rock, where a small whirlpool seized the canoe and whisked her round twice before they steadied her on the course again. I had no idea that the river was so large or mighty before crossing it, and am inclined to give the width and depth as somewhat greater than before. Steadily we neared the opposite shore; the tall boatmen, standing on their feet, bending to the work with great vigour, propelled the clumsy concern along until we were once more whisked round in a curling little bay, and then she grated on the shore. Jumping out, I seized the canoe, pulled her nose high and dry to prevent her from

floating off, and ran up the bank to wave a white handkerchief three times as a signal that all was well. We had done the ferry-men an injustice in our suspicions, for they certainly showed no desire to do anything but their best to ferry us over the river.

As soon as the boys on the other side recognised the signal a scene that beats all description ensued. They seized several small canoes lying at the banks belonging to the natives, who had come in hopes of finding relics in the deserted camp, and, taking the reluctant Franz bodily up, forced him into a canoe, where they told him to lie flat or he would be drowned, and be hanged to him, and also putting Hammar into the best canoe at their disposal, they pushed the expostulating natives aside, and with shouts and yells came paddling over. Some swimming alongside to steady and push the canoes with their hands, and others paddling with their bare arms over the sides, they came screaming, laughing, splashing, and racing over, displaying the greatest dexterity and knowledge in handling these rickety little wet craft. When all were landed, they kicked the canoes into the river to show their contempt for the Mombokooshus, and yelled across the stream to the owners to fetch their dirty boats. We were surprised and somewhat alarmed, as I had also been at our boys, to see several Mombokooshus jump into the water, spite of crocodiles, and swim after their drifting canoes, expecting every moment to see a head go under, pulled down by a reptile to reappear no more; but they all reached their canoes with safety, and then gave us a display of their prowess at paddling in the rapid current over the small cataracts, quite astonishing in its nicety. Probably the crocodiles had deserted this spot, driven away by the constant traffic usual there! The great feature was to work the canoe, certainly not a foot wide and often less than sixteen feet in length, along the bank against the current, where it is weakest, standing on their feet while they paddled, as securely as one of us would stand on firm ground, sending the little cockle-shell hissing forward against the stream until they had worked their way up above the point where

the boulders lay more in the centre of the stream. Then, first baling her out rapidly by dexterous manipulation with the flat paddles, they would pull out into the stronger current, and, facing round, would shoot down the rapids between the rocks while standing bolt upright in their frail little craft, and with occasional vigorous strokes here and there would direct the course of their canoes, which appeared to us like thin little black lines, just visible above the surging water, as they dashed past between the black boulders, and then, caught by a whirlpool, would whisk round once or twice before reaching calmer water below. Then, with a shout to attract attention from the onlookers, they would throw the water shipped during the passage sparkling high into the air with their paddles, vaunting their dexterity in having passed through without shipping more than one or two paddlesful as the case might be, while the quantity was jealously computed by the other boatmen, who seemed to feel a keen sense of rivalry at this kind of sport, a fact showing that this is one of their national pastimes.

As soon as we had transported the goods to a convenient tree by the river-bank where we camped, two tall, graceful men, with the slightly oblique eyes that characterise the Bechuanas, dressed in good European clothes, came up and tendered us the time of day ('Dumela Morehn') in the language we were both surprised and pleased to hear—Sechuana. These were the people we had observed with so much interest from the other side of the river. 'Dumela Morehn?' what people could these be? and what could they be doing so far from their homes? They told us that they came from Lake Ngami, on business with Indala, for whom they expressed a cordial dislike; and although at first we mistrusted them acutely, the leader, Intuhe by name, with his gentlemanly manners and quiet ways, so won upon our feelings that before the day was over we had already begun to look on him as a friend. He told us that he was here with three hundred men, who were camped close by in the sand-belt to the west, and that he would

give us any assistance in his power; and before long we told him who we were, and what it was our intention to do. On hearing that we wished to proceed up the Cubango, he looked very grave, and told us that it was impossible for us to go that way, as some white men had killed a chief near Darico on the river, and the natives would never allow another white man into the country. He advised us to go to Lake Ngami. This tale seemed to accord with what Indala had previously told me at our first meeting, and therefore made a considerable impression on us; for with the small troop of men we had, it was impossible to force our way through really hostile tribes. We might fight our way past a small chief; but when the whole country was unanimously up in arms against white people, it gave a different complexion to our chances. I may at once confess to the reader that afterwards we found this was a trumped-up tale, told us for reasons which appear later. The other course open westward to Walfish bay had little interest for us, our principal object being to follow the main water-courses of the country; and as there was a good stretch of river lying between here and Lake Ngami unexplored, we began to look favourably upon this route, although our minds were really set westward up the Cubango. I offered Intuhe £100 if he would accompany us with his force past Darico, but he gravely told me, and quite correctly also, that his king was not at war with the people of Darico, and therefore he dare not go, and that we had better follow his advice and go to the lake.

While Intuhe was talking to us, Indala's nephew, a young man called Libebe, came with four of his followers to beg from us. They were armed with flintlock guns, and bows and arrows. Intuhe recognised one of his slaves, who had deserted him on a former visit here, amongst Libebe's henchmen, and, turning, asked him sharply who his master was. The man impudently told him to mind his own business, when Intuhe said, 'The man who is your master has the right to kill you if he likes.' At these words Libebe and his men got up and

threatened to kill Intuhe, when I, to keep the fun going, thrust a loaded gun into Intuhe's hands, and told him in case of necessity we would back him; for we were all anxious to have a chance at the Mombokooshus, and, feeling reinforced by Intuhe, were prepared to join in any fray that would give us the opportunity of wiping off some of the old scores. Intuhe took the gun quietly, and said to Libebe, 'You are only a child. Think you, if you kill Intuhe here, that he has no friends to look for his bones? Go away before you are hurt.' Rather disappointed that affairs had ended so quietly, we questioned Intuhe why, when he had spoken of fighting and killing, he had not at least claimed his slave. He answered with the same quiet dignity he always wore, 'There are some things white people don't understand.'

Shortly afterwards Libebe came back with fifteen armed men, and proceeded to surround our camp, while Intuhe, who again took from me the rifle and a packet of cartridges, quietly watched, seated on his stool, what Libebe was doing; but not inclined to put up with this insult, and wishing to give the Mombokooshus a lesson, I went up to Libebe to prevent him from completing the circle round us, and thrust the end of my rifle with all my force into the pit of his stomach, a blow that knocked the wind out of him, and sent him sprawling. I could clearly see that Intuhe was acting under strong impulses to fight only on the defensive, and was waiting for some distinct aggressive act before proceeding to extreme measures. Libebe's men took their injured master up and walked away, cursing and threatening all sorts of things, while Intuhe laughed quietly at his discomfiture. We were wound up to such a pitch of resentment at the indignities we had suffered at the hands of Indala and his people, that we would have welcomed any opportunity giving an opening to take a little satisfaction out of them; and Hammar was ominously attentive to his gun at times. Even Franz, who on hearing his own language spoken once more waxed valiant, spoke powder and lead to our boys, who, however, now they had got his measure, received his new-born pluck with loud derision.

His prestige amongst them was gone for ever. However, mindful of our first principles not to fight unless in actual danger of life, I preached forbearance in words, although nothing would have pleased me better than to join in any row once fairly started.

There was a strong motive underlying Intuhe's action, which, although we only learned the truth months later, it is fitting should be here explained.

It appears that Indala and his forefathers claimed to be wizards who had complete power over the fates of the Cubango river, and could at will cause the stream to dry up, or become poisonous, as they pleased; and, on the strength of this belief, he imposed heavy tribute on the superstitious people living on the river's course below, most important among whom were the lake people, who, while having the greatest contempt for the Mombo-kooshus as fighting men, dare not risk their displeasure, which threatened such heavy penalties.

Indala, exploiting this fear to the full, rode the high horse over these foolish people, who, to keep on the right side of the magician, annually despatched corn, ivory, feathers, and the most beautiful maidens of their tribe, to soothe the temper of this impostor. Not a bad position for Mr. Indala! We half-expected that the violence done to Libebe would lead to serious consequences; but although we held ourselves ready for emergencies, nothing further came of it.

We felt somewhat dissatisfied because Intuhe expressed the determination that no other road but the one to the lake should be open to us, and would not discuss further any probabilities or possibilities of our reaching the West Coast, even by Walfish bay. He seemed to have made up his mind that we should go to the lake, and only on this condition would he lend us guides or give us advice. However, as we had made up our minds that this was the best course for us to pursue, it mattered little, for, as before mentioned, even here we were passing through unexplored regions.

The events of this day convinced us that the Darico tale

was a myth, and the difficulties held up to us on the route to the West Coast much magnified. Intuhe had his reasons, and when we declared as a test that, spite of his advice, we should proceed up the river, he informed us that in this case he would have to join Indala in preventing such a course being carried out, and that we must go to the lake. Plainly speaking, he had orders from the king of the lake to send us there! We heard from some of our boys, whom we sent out to spy into Intuhe's affairs, that he had quite an army of men, over three hundred in fact, and that we were taken for Matabele spies. Intuhe's men told our boys that there was a white man somewhere in the country travelling with three Matabele spies, whom they would kill as soon as they met with them. Involuntarily I thought of Paul and the indiscretions of the Matabele Makalaka Styman, who on the voyage up the Chobe indulged the sense of humour by bickering with the Mashubia in that obnoxious language, but could hardly credit the fact that this news could have already reached the lake, so many miles away. However, one of the strangest things in the world is how quickly news will travel amongst the natives.

In the afternoon I let the king know that we would leave in the morning, and called over to the island that I wished to visit him. But the Mombokooshus, evidently not liking my treatment of Libebe, answered that the king was away.

The upshot of the whole situation was that we asked Intuhe to give us two guides to take us to the lake, when he quietly informed us that he had already sent for them, and that they would be with us shortly. We thanked him, and offered him several small presents of things that we could well spare. He refused to accept anything, saying that as we were both in the veldt, it was not right that he should deprive us of our necessities. But if we would lend him our saw for a while to cut his horses' hoofs with, he would return it, and be much beholden to us for the kindness.

Intuhe is the first and only native I have met—always excepting Khama—who during all my wanderings in South

Africa ever refused to accept presents. He religiously kept his promise, and sent back the saw. Unaccustomed as we had been to meet with truthful natives for months, his quiet behaviour, upright character, and agreeable personality were very refreshing to our worried minds, and we insisted that he should take a pair of saddle-bags that he had been wistfully eyeing for some time, and a few cartridges, as a memento of our goodwill towards him.

We bought a pack-ox from Gonsalvus—at a price—and a young bull, more to get rid of our useless remaining goods than with the object of possessing the cattle, although these would come in handy for food later; and on the arrival of the beasts the boys held quite a circus, jocularly declaring that now they were going to ride to the lake, being tired of walking. Chiki mounted first, and was promptly unseated by the ox, who evidently disapproved of the liberty, and then all the pluckier boys took a turn at the animal, who evinced the same decided objection to being ridden as he had done in the case of Chiki, and put them off as quickly as they mounted.

Next we put packs on the cattle to see how they would comport themselves, as a preparation for the journey before us. As soon as they were packed and freed, however, by a succession of wild jumps they managed to get rid of their loads, whereby we learned a lesson to tie the things on more securely. It was rather rough on them to be tied up thus, like mummies, with bast and rope; but we gained our object of breaking them in, for, spite of all their furious jumping and bucking, the loads held fast, and later on in the journey, as soon as they became tractable, we eased them as much as possible.

This night was spent in little sleep, for with the various disturbing elements of the day, we knew not exactly what to expect. At dawn Intuhe arrived with the guides, and as we were preparing to start, to our surprise Indala came up attended only by two of his men, his talker and the interpreter. We had thought to have seen the last of him, expecting that the Mom-bokooshus had had enough of us, but he came cheerfully up as

if on the best of terms, and demanded as a farewell gift from us an iron basin or dish, which Franz, now valiant again, seized and refused to hand over ; but Indala, letting out some of his temper at him, soon induced him to drop the dish as if it had been too warm to hold, whereat our boys roared with laughter at poor Franz. Handing the dish to Indala, I asked him if he at last was satisfied. With a hungry eye directed at our packs, now beyond his reach, he assented. Then I took him by the hand, and, calling Paul and his interpreters, held him with my firmest grip, and told him on behalf of all white men what was uppermost in my mind about him : that he was a scoundrel, and deserved to be shot for the way he had treated us, and warned him in future to behave well to white men, otherwise some day they would come and punish him. Unexpectedly the words seemed to affect him ; and as he found he could not release himself from my grip, he had to listen, while with the able agency of Paul I read him a lesson, during which he actually hung his head, and then I let go. He looked once at his crushed fingers, and, hastily waving his hand in token of farewell, turned and went home.

We gave a letter addressed to the German Geographical Society at Berlin, of which I was a member, to Gonsalvus, begging him to forward it from the West Coast on his arrival there, and, shaking hands with him and Intuhe, we turned southward. The letter given to Gonsalvus never reached its destination.

The Mombokooshus, a tribe inhabiting the central Okovanga river, called by themselves Cubangwe, are a well-built race of tall people, broad and strong in figure. Their features are like those of the Barotzi, and their habits and clothing the same. They all wear the cloth or strip of soft buck-hide drawn between the legs, tied tightly behind and before to a stout string round the waist. The colour of their skin varies from deep, dirty black to coffee colour. The hair shaved away from the forehead falls backwards over the head in small, crisp, negro curls, and is often smeared with some reddish substance mixed with

fat. They also smear their bodies with this same mixture, thus imparting a red colour to their general appearance similar to the Macheeayee on the Chobe.

The few women we saw were monstrously ugly, and appear withered at an early age. They tie long strips of twisted bast to the end of their crinkling hair, ornamented with glass beads from Europe, and little discs cut from the shell of ostrich eggs, letting the whole mass, well greased, fall in a cascade down their backs, producing a 'waterfall' effect not unlike that of their more civilised sisters during the schoolday period of their lives.

The Mombokooshus grow corn, mealies, and pumpkins, and keep small troops of cattle. They are expert fishermen, and are marvellously dexterous in handling their small canoes, made from the single stem of a tree, standing erect while paddling, one at the bow and one at the stern, and sending the little structure along at great speed by vigorous strokes, securely delivered by means of their long paddles.

CHAPTER XX

We march down the Okovanga—Grand country—Opportunities for settlers—
Hammar gets parted from the expedition by accident—Natives fishing in the
Okovanga swamps—Atmospheric temperature rising—In Moremi's territory
—Mosquitoes.

WHAT a strange feeling it was to tramp almost in the opposite direction from that which by long habit it had become a sort of instinct with us to take! We were so accustomed to face the west point of the horizon that it seemed as if something was out of gear to walk in any other direction. We travelled down the right river-bank, south-east by east, for thirteen and a half miles, the pack-oxen answering well after the first half of the day. The river along here is one of the most beautiful sights one could wish to see. Fine green islands with magnificent trees occupied the course of the stream, with channels of clear deep water running between, and both banks of the river were lined with sombre-looking forests of large trees, varied occasionally by strips of the mimosa acacia. As we proceeded we passed several small cataracts, hardly more than mere unevennesses in the water, which with foaming streaks whirled away, forming deep, still pools of water, where hippopotami lolled apparently in great comfort in their congenial surroundings. What a cruel misjudgment of nature to populate so gloriously lovely a place with such a despicable race of inhabitants!

This country is marvellously fertile in soil, with a mighty water power that could be easily utilised owing to the lowness of the banks confining the river, and the rapid fall of the country, for irrigation purposes on a scale stupendous in its

possibilities, and also as a motive power unequalled except by the greatest falls in the world.

Judging from the native cotton growing wild on the banks, and the quantities of cornfields we passed, the country would support many thousands of Europeans, in absolute independence and even wealth, who at present strive so hardly to keep body and soul together in the trying winter seasons of Northern Europe. Here is no severe winter and no starvation with its consequent illnesses, but here is a soil which, properly tilled, will yield crops in an abundance that would amaze the ordinary European. A good cattle country also, with no tsetse fly, forests of trees capable of being turned to all uses necessary for civilised life, with a charming climate, slightly warm at the start for new arrivals, but dry and healthy, and lastly, most important of all, with a navigable waterway for large craft extending from the Makari Kari lake *via* Lake Ngami up the Cubango to Indala's, and even into the Chobe at certain seasons of the year—during May, June, July—through the channel we discovered connecting the two rivers, and so on down to the Zambesi, whose waters are also navigable for a great distance, totalling an open watercourse over one thousand miles in extent. What grand opportunities are held out to the future settlers of this country, and what practical facilities are offered by this waterway for connecting railways coming from either coast, with a string of steam-boats that can supply the settlers in the interior with the means of transport.

With the strides of civilised occupation that are rapidly taking place in South Africa, the time may not be far distant when the hum of water-driven machinery shall echo from bank to bank of the Cubango, and mingle with the music of lowing herds and the wholesome sound of civilised life. Once span the short distance still intervening between the railway line, now almost an accomplished fact, through Khama's country to Matabeleland from the Cape, and the head-waters of the

Makari Kari, and this apparently romantic forecast of mine can soon be an accomplished fact. I have no hesitation in stating that boats of about eight feet draught would find no obstruction but the floating reed in their course from the head of the Makari Kari lake almost up to Indala's island, and that boats of two to three feet draught could pass the channel connecting the Okovanga with the Chobe, in which the water again is deep enough to float the heaviest ironclad in existence.

The country between Mongwato and the Makari Kari being practically a level for railway purposes, consisting of sand-belts alternating with turf laagtes, offers every facility for the building of railways at a minimum engineering cost. No cuttings or bridges are needed, culverts will hardly be necessary to carry off the water that rarely, if ever, accumulates in this dry waste, for it is a fact that while there is barely enough water to drink in the periodically occurring pans, no running water has ever been seen in the desert during the wettest season that has ever taken place within the knowledge of the present generation, the rain being immediately absorbed by the porous sand, as it drops from the heavens. So much of fact.

Theoretically speaking, to judge from the geological and topographical data pertaining to this part of the Kalahari desert, artesian wells should tap sufficient water to support great cattle runs, for which the climate is especially suited. Bare as the soil at present is, and covered by the ghosts of stunted leafless trees, it is surprising when it actually rains how the vegetation springs into life. Trees that apparently were dead before send forth verdant foliage, and a thin succulent grass carpets the ground, imparting a park-like appearance to the whole country. However, as these rains are most unreliable, occurring perhaps once in several years, it is easily comprehended why this part of the world is a waste. An artesian well would soon alter this, and change

the circle of its action into a veritable garden, for, spite of its sandy nature, the soil is rich. The climate itself, being phenomenally dry, is perfectly healthy, and justly has healing qualities for phthisis ascribed to its influence. I personally know of cases of phthisis, already far gone, that had their course arrested by a trip through the Kalahari, in which the patients, hardly able to walk on their arrival, again became vigorous and active individuals, able to do a day's march with their companions.

In conclusion, let me remark that cattle ranching, with artesian wells to supply water for irrigating the pastures, would prove a most healthful and lucrative occupation for those whose existence is threatened by lung complications in the colder and damper climates of Europe.

Heartily glad to be rid of Indala and his people we passed a pleasant night, and next morning, after marching three miles along the river, still in the same direction, found that its course made a bend towards the north-east. We cut across a sand-belt to avoid following the course of the river, and after going some miles, I shot some guinea-fowls: then, being some distance ahead of the column, I waited and roasted the fowls for breakfast, expecting Hammar to join me when he came up. He, however, expressed himself dissatisfied with making a halt in the sand-belt without water and went on alone, while the boys were still far behind. How it came to pass, or what course of reasoning led him to the belief, I know not, but finding no one at the river three miles ahead, he, without recollecting that we were all behind, came to the conclusion that we had struck higher up, and consequently, without giving much thought to the matter, made out into the sand-belt to cross our tracks which, of course, never existed there. This was about eleven o'clock.

As Hammar proceeded he was suddenly struck by the fear that the chronometer would run down, as this was the day to wind it up, a duty he himself performed so regularly

that it never crossed my mind to interfere in the matter, nor did I know the date of winding. He went on and on many miles, and when we afterwards reached the river by following his trail, he was gone. Even then it never struck me that there was much chance of missing him, so I took three of the best boys and followed on his track, while I told the others to go on and camp about five miles ahead, where they halted at a creek after thirteen and a half miles total march.

We had arranged between us that, if either of us should ever wander beyond the knowledge of his exact position with regard to the camp, immediately on realising the fact he should either return on his back track, and listen for signals from camp to be fired every half-hour, or await calmly the arrival of those who should come on his track to look for him. We also compared our watches daily to mark the time when a wanderer might expect to hear the half-hourly shots arranged for.

We went on expecting at every laagte to see Hammar calmly smoking his pipe under some tree. At last, after going full eight miles, we suddenly found that the stride of his track increased to such a length that it cost me quite a running effort to cover them with my own steps. The boys looked gloomily at me and said that now he had started to run he would not stop till he dropped. Men who lost themselves in the desert were subject to a kind of panic, and once overtaken by this feeling they never halted till exhaustion compelled them to stop. Unfortunately we had no water with us, so it was almost useless following him further just then, probably to find him in a state of exhaustion, without something to revive him. However, I had a better opinion of Hammar's strength of character than to believe he would run himself to death; and knew that as soon as he got tired and realised his position he would make for our last halting-place, with the unerring instinct belonging to him mentioned before, and follow on the

course we had taken from there to our present camp, in the knowledge that we would not move on until he reached us. Just then we observed some natives eight hundred yards ahead, and hoping that they perhaps had seen him, we showed ourselves and signalled to them. But as soon as they saw us they fled out of the laagte into the bushes, and we could get no nearer to them. This conduct was not reassuring, supposing they had really met him, and gave rise to unpleasant suspicions for Hammar's safety.

There was, however, no time to lose if we wished to serve Hammar. Back to camp we must go as hard as we could and start the signal gun, and if he did not turn up during the night, as soon as his track would be visible by the coming daylight we should go, well provided with water and food, and follow till we found him.

Hammar's special boy, Springkant, was so anxious about his master's welfare that he led us home at a great pace, and insisted on firing the signals himself, no easy task, for the elephant gun loaded with twelve drams of powder rammed down with an enormous wad of paper to increase the report took some holding while she was let off. Springkant, however, valiantly drew the trigger, holding the gun tightly to his shoulder, and pointing the muzzle low under my instructions; and at precisely five o'clock P.M. the first shot was discharged. Religiously to the second we kept up the signal every half-hour, till at 10.30 in the night I thought of desisting, as no sign appeared from Hammar. Our anxiety was terrible, knowing the dire effects of thirst in this dry climate. There was little chance of Hammar finding a pan of water in this particular sand-belt, owing to its rising higher than usual above the level of the river-bank, and recollections of poor French's sad end unwillingly forced themselves on our minds. To lose the companion who had bravely faced all the past hardships and dangers without a murmur, and who by kindly forbearance and gentle tact had won a place at my side, was so bitter a

sensation that I would gladly have made any sacrifice to see the weatherbeaten figure of my companion come striding into camp.

Franz sat by the fire like a bird of evil omen, croaking his fears aloud, till, almost maddened, I harshly ordered him to hold his tongue under penalty of a good flogging.

Meanwhile Springkant had quietly loaded his gun on his own account with a heavy extra charge, in his anxiety to help his master, and, although his shoulder ached again, he bravely came to ask me whether the time was not ripe for the shot to be fired. It was just time. He put the gun up, and pulled, when the violent recoil of the overcharged gun sent him spinning on his back, and the gun flying on to the sand several yards behind him. But before he could pick himself up, joy of joys! we heard three shots fired in rapid succession about two miles out. Grasping my gun and singing out to Chiki to bring a big calabash of water along, I rushed off in the direction of the shots, and soon was delighted to see a fire blazing in the distance, to which I hurried as fast as my legs could go. There lay Hammar, thank God, by the fire, prostrate from exhaustion, so utterly done that he could not put one foot before the other, it is true, but still Hammar alive. The boys came rushing up shouting with joy, as their fears had been of the worst, and then, giving him a small drink of water as a preliminary, we carried him into camp. Hammar's first words were, 'Have you wound the chronometer?' No, I had not, and on reaching the camp we found that it had stopped. With small doses of weak tea I nursed him back to a more vigorous state, and then gave him sparingly of a roasted guinea-fowl, the only food we had. His face looked like a piece of wood, and was so pinched and dried up that a casual acquaintance would never have recognised him, and it was several days before he regained his usual appearance, hard and weatherbeaten as it was. As soon as Hammar was sufficiently recovered, a great excitement came over him, and he related with minute detail the story of his wandering,

although I begged him to desist, as it was enough for us that he was actually again in our midst, and the story could wait till to-morrow.

The reader knows the story up to the point of where we met the natives who ran away at our appearance. Hammar had met these also, and, as a result of trying to make them understand that he was looking for a party, got for answer something which he, of course, could not understand; they pointed further up the laagte, which Hammar mistook for an assertion that we had gone that way, and hurried on to overtake us. He went so fast and far in his anxiety to be in time to wind the chronometer, that, before he realised what he was really doing, it was 6.30 o'clock. Then recognising the impossibility of our having travelled so far ahead of him, and troubled by vague doubts that perhaps after all he had crossed our track in the early part of the day without seeing it, he suddenly came to the conclusion to sit down and have a good think over the position, before making a further move. While resting he divested himself of his cartridge belt, and listened. Shortly after eight o'clock he declares to distinctly have heard a faint sound like 'bah' from our direction, but not being sure of the angle, as he had expected the sound from another quarter to which his attention had been turned, he waited till 8.30, and again heard the same 'bah,' and now, sure of the signals, started off at a rapid pace towards camp. He had not gone far, and, while thinking of the possibility of missing us and forming plans how then he would have to make for the lake alone, an appalling fact burst on his mind when thinking of how many cartridges he had to shoot game, where-with to support himself on the tramp. He had left his cartridge belt at the tree. It was already dark, and his thirst was terrible, but under the conditions there was only one thing to be done, and that was to return for his cartridges. He assured me that the trip back to the tree was made in great anxiety, for he was in fear of not being able to find the spot in the darkness, and then he perhaps might have to wait till daylight to find his belt, and he felt that his ever-increasing

thirst would make this almost impossible, for it seemed as if he could not sit still even a moment. Fortune favoured him, for he recognised the tree by its contour in the dark when he was almost in despair of succeeding.

With his cartridges again in his possession, the misery of his position seemed much lightened, and he became almost joyous at this apparently trifling success. At a pinch he felt quite able now to travel to the lake alone.

Now he started in the dark, for the moon had not yet risen, and hurried off campwards, waiting at the preconcerted time to distinguish the signal shots which kept him on the course. As he proceeded in this manner, falling over tree-trunks and into holes, for no obstacle would induce him to leave the line, for fear of wandering, towards nine o'clock he became so exhausted that, falling severely over a log, he simply lay, wishing that something would happen to end the torturing thirst, now amounting to a severe pain and a cruel dizziness in the head. The 9.30 o'clock shot, however, boomed louder than before, inviting him to struggle on and on, staggering through the trees that seemed to his dizzy senses to swim around him in the vague moonlight—for the moon had now risen—until he thought he was also wandering from the line that should take him to us. Yet, as he desperately forced his steps on, he now clearly recognised the boom of the big gun growing more distinct each shot, like a voice encouraging him to further exertion. He would now have fired and lain down, but for the fear that the sound of his shot would not reach us; and, held up by the expectation of reaching the camp, which could not possibly be so far off now, he struggled on till eleven o'clock, and then dropped sheer down, unable to move another step. Luckily where he fell there were plenty of leaves and dry wood, so, scraping an armful together, he stuck a lighted match into the tinder-like substance, and then firing the signal shots which we had heard, he lay down with closed eyes, hardly knowing or caring what was going on around him, and perfectly indifferent to the possibility of a lion attacking him. The sound of

murmuring water rang in his ears, like the bubbling of a brook, causing quite pleasant sensations, till we came up. The thirst had disappeared during the last half hour, and he only wanted peace—a sure symptom that he was near a crisis. The first water we gave him seemed nothing extraordinary, but a few minutes later his raging thirst returned with all its horror, and he felt inclined to grasp the calabash to empty it at a draught. Each mouthful of water I gave him seemed to increase the desire for more, and, if left alone, he would probably have swallowed sufficient to do himself an injury.

It always was a matter of interest to me to think how far Hammar had actually travelled on this particular day. He had been on his feet for sixteen full hours, many of which he had put behind him at a run. He reckoned his devious course (from 11 to 6.30) had taken him sixteen miles in a direct line from camp, but he had travelled much more than this, making from one likely looking spot to another in a zig-zag direction, before deciding to listen for the signal shots. We came to the conclusion, that, coupled with the morning march, he must have covered between sixty and seventy miles without touching a drop of water the whole distance, and this through sand.

All night he kept on telling me his tale, drinking kettle after kettle of weak tea, in sips, until daylight, as if his thirst would never end.

In the morning Hammar complained of his foot, from which I had a couple of years previously been obliged to amputate the big toe, which had been lacerated by a shot. We found the whole sole of the foot one large inflamed blister, which promised to be very refractory to treat, and would take a long time to heal. Under these circumstances it was advisable for Hammar to rest, and, requesting him to lie still, I went out shooting, and killed a solitary letzwee buck, grazing near the river, which, for the last ten miles, had been widening out into a reed-covered swamp like the Chobe, between two and four miles wide. On returning to camp I found that Hammar had

gone on ahead, spite of my desire that he should rest, and consequently we shifted camp seven and a half miles down the river, where we overtook him nursing his foot. He had also started the chronometer again by a longitude taken at Indala's, allowing by dead reckoning for any difference in the time.

The following day Hammar again pluckily struggled ahead with his sore foot, only requesting that I should leave the treatment to him alone, and give him the necessary dressings to bind it up with. He troubled us so little about it that shortly I forgot the circumstance. We passed enormous flocks of guinea-fowls feeding in old cornfields along the river banks, so unsophisticated that the boys killed a great number with their sticks, and we obtained a good supply of food for the mere trouble of killing them in this simple manner.

We passed many small Mombokooshu villages, and saw women fishing along the swamps that line the river banks, where the fish had been closed in by brush-wood fences rapidly erected by the natives, and caught in pools left by the fast receding water of the Cubango, which, like the Chobe, also has its flood season. The river was now quite four miles broad, covered with reeds, in whose midst fine bush-grown islands were visible towering above them, but without the, to us, familiar feature of the kolahni palm. Otherwise the river had so many characteristics in common with the Chobe, as we knew it, that it would have required very little imagination to have thought oneself moving along that stream.

This day, the 9th of September, the thermometer registered the highest point we had yet experienced—ninety-three degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. Yet, owing to the dryness of the atmosphere, we felt no inconvenience at all from heat.

September and October are the hottest months in this part of the interior, owing to the approaching sun from the North shining, unhindered by clouds, directly on the earth's surface. The hunters of this country recommend the advisability of remaining inactive during these two months, for the experiences

practically gained in the country prove the wisdom of this step. Later, as the rainy season sets in, the clouds interfere with the direct action of the sun, a much cooler and more agreeable temperature rules the atmosphere.

We met another of Intuhe's men from the lake on the road down. He evidently was here to report to his chief how we progressed along the river; he was instrumental in procuring us a good supply of corn from the natives, which formed a very welcome addition to our fast-diminishing stock of food.

Next day we came upon an open expanse of the river literally swarming with hippopotami, rolling and grunting in the water. It is a very magnificent sight to observe these huge beasts at play, chasing each other about, appearing like small iron-clads as they jump half body out of water, and snap their huge jaws together, with a report like the crack of a pistol-shot. We waited here to see if there was a possibility of killing one of them for food, but as they seemed very wary, and we had no boat to approach them nearer with, we went on, passing through some thick bush with many fine trees, in fragrant blossom. Fortunately we came upon great swarms of guinea-fowl, feeding in cornfields, which supplied us with food as before. The last two days we made twenty-five and a half miles in a south-east direction.

On September the 11th we passed a village of Mosaros, here called 'Makalahari' by the Mombokooshus, the most appropriate name for these people we have yet heard, as it indicates their place of abode, and were told that now we trod soil claimed by King 'Moremi' of Lake Ngami, Letchulatebe's son. We traded corn from these Makalahari, who were the most domesticated lot of that wandering tribe we had hitherto met. The difference in their behaviour to that of our past experiences amongst the avaricious, sharp Mombokooshus came as a pleasant surprise to us who had lately been accustomed to wrangle for every ordinary privilege. They brought only seventeen pounds of corn, saying they were afraid to enter into a larger trade, owing to the absence of their head man, whom they

did not wish to risk offending during his absence, by a more extensive sale. Our boys expressing a desire for meat, we killed the smaller of the two cattle purchased so dearly at Indala's, and held a feast, resting for the day, That night we were much troubled by mosquitoes, now beginning to be active as the warm weather was coming on.

CHAPTER XXI

Cross the Ngamasero or Qaudum River—Hear of white man taken prisoner by Moremi's people—Makubas confirm the overflow of water from Cubango to Chobe—No game—Short of food—Shoot crocodile—Vast swamps of the Cubango—Bush buck dangerous—Take quinine prophylactically—Cool east wind—The Waacht een beetje thorn (Wait a bit thorn)—Meet native elephant hunter—Almost step on leopard—We walk into hunter's camp and are made prisoners—Elephant's biltong—Morning devotions.

WITH the next day's march we reached a mixed village of Mombokooshus and Makalakas, who seemed to fraternise heartily together. Their kraal was situated on an island, in a wet laagte, where the retreating winter flood had left them surrounded by mud and débris of questionably healthy odour, while a stream flowed river-wards down the middle of the laagte. This stream, we were informed, came a long way from the west-north-west, and was called 'Ngamasero,' and also 'Qaudum' (Qowdum), but I should be afraid to assign the derivation of its water to any other source than the overflow of the Cubango, as it appeared to possess too little current of its own to warrant the belief in a separate river. Here, also, we again saw mopani trees, the first since passing through the mopani forest, just below Moheni's on the Chobe. We heard a report from the natives that a white man accompanied by three Matabele spies had been taken prisoner by Moremi's men, near the lake, and was now at the king's village. We crossed the Qowdum (Q has a *linguo-palatal* click) in water up to our middles, then proceeded across several dried valleys and sand-belts, and camped in a beautiful little dry opening in the bush, where the massing mosquitoes compelled us to erect our muslin tents for the first time on the trip. We made only sixteen miles in the last two days.

The next nine miles brought us to several families of people far different in appearance to the Mombokooshus or Makalahari living on islands on the river. There was something familiar to us in their gigantic stature, and to our inquiries they answered that they called themselves Makuba. A mention of the Macheeayee tribe immediately opened their hearts, and they confessed themselves as belonging to these, and told us of a water connection flowing from the Cubango into the Chobe, along which they travelled in their canoes, indicating the depth of the channel as up to their middles, but also informed us that there were times when they had to pull their larger canoes a short distance through the mud and rushes left behind during the season when the river had sunk to its lowest level. At this time of the year the channel was still navigable for large canoes, but about the time when the first rains fell it usually became more dry.

This day I shot a large crane of such unusual appearance that a superficial description of it will not be out of place. In height the bird was quite four feet from the ground, of a general black and white colour, with a greenish purple blue shot of colour in the wings. Its tail feathers, black, were twelve in number. From the root of the upper mandible depended a bright yellow flap of loose skin, with two small globular pendants underneath, of the same colour. The beak was bright red, and had a black stripe, half an inch or more in width, round the middle, that faded away underneath the lower mandible, leaving that part of the beak bright red. This meagre description leaves a lot to be desired, but I hope some ornithologist may, from these leading points, be able to identify the bird.

Our commissariat department began to give us serious concern, for, as there was hardly any game in the country and corn could only occasionally be purchased sparingly, because none of the natives were willing to sell much at a time, even at the exorbitant prices we offered, we felt rather in a fix. The only article that would induce them to part with a small quantity of corn was gunpowder. By the judicious display of a little

of this commodity we managed to attract some would-be sellers, and then palmed off beads and a few handkerchiefs that had escaped Indala's rapacity on them in return, after much exposition on their part, as they all wished us to give them powder. But our coarse trading powder was nearly finished, and what little remained we intended to keep for greater emergencies, likely to occur on ahead. The absence of game probably had its explanation in the fact that the natives here were armed with guns, and have driven away what has not otherwise been shot to more distant pastures. To all our inquiries they said that the game was gone, and there was none within a day's march of the river in the parts they knew. Occasionally a giraffe appeared, but generally made off again, scared away, if not killed by them. Hippo there were plenty in the river, but these they would not venture near in their frail canoes, as the old bulls, fierce masters of the position, became infuriated when attacked, and could smash a canoe up into pieces with one bite of their enormous jaws. Things looked decidedly unpleasant for us.

Passing through old cornfields alternating with swamp for six and a half miles in the early cool of next day I shot a steinbok, and, later, a seven and a half foot long crocodile. This latter beast was lying on short grass on the abrupt low bank of the stream where the water came with a deep sweep clear up to the river's bank. His head was projecting over the surface in a motionless calm, an attitude common to this reptile when asleep. I crawled up to within thirty yards, and, marking the spot just above and behind the eye where the small brain-pan is situated, pulled. A small shower, as of a substance not unlike broken cauliflower, scattered over the water at the shot, but the crocodile never moved, and I was just thinking of firing again when its head dropped from the horizontal position it hitherto had maintained loosely into the water. We pulled the animal away by its tail, and found that the bullet had completely emptied out the brain-pan, membranes and all, which accounted for the white substance being scattered over the water.

The boys cut the reptile open, and thrust their feet in amongst the intestines, remarking that this was an infallible remedy to keep them from being pricked by thorns on the road. The animal's intestines were perfectly empty, not even as much as a scale from a fish occupying the alimentary canal from one end to the other. Probably the beast had just wakened from hibernating through the winter, a fact that never struck us before; which also probably explained the reason why we saw so few crocodiles on our long journey constantly associated with water.

Towards evening we were lucky in purchasing a large basket of corn for a cotton shirt, from a native living in the reeds; and this kept us sparingly provided with food for a couple of days.

The country we now passed through was swampy, covered with little islets or knolls of higher dry land, on one of which we camped for the night, thankful to be sheltered by our nets from the clouds of mosquitoes that plagued the boys all night. The river had widened considerably, and now, even from the trees we climbed to look from, the opposite bank was not visible. All that could be seen was a vast plain of reeds dotted here and there with occasional islands and rushes fringing the edge of the reeds.

Our route continued over wet and marshy soil, of much the same character as we had already passed, with knolls growing in the wet flats, till at last, tired of the everlasting dampness, we struck out into the sand-belts on our right, hoping to keep a line near enough to be within reach of water and yet have the comfort of walking dry.

I shot a beautiful bush-buck ram similar to those of Natal, but somewhat smaller in stature, with many more white spots scattered over his sides, clothed also with a lighter red hair. The bush-buck, *Tragelaphus sylvaticus*, spite of his moderate stature, is a perfect hero in courage, and when wounded not to be approached with indifference, as they defend themselves effectively with their sharp horns. Many instances are related by hunters of the straits they have been put to when incautiously

following into thickets a wounded bush-buck, who, hard pressed, has made a determined attack on his pursuers with his short straight horns that compelled them to take refuge up the nearest tree. He is not to be trifled with at such times; and a case is on record in Natal where some children returning from school along a bush path were met by a wounded ram flying from the chase, who buried his horns in the abdomen of one of them, a boy of nine years old called Rethman, inflicting injuries that caused his death immediately afterwards.

A large pan we passed thickly populated with black spur-winged geese provided us with a good meal. I shot several with two shots from the long Martini-Henry, getting them in line before I pulled the trigger, and Hammar made some excellent flying long shots, bringing down some more with the double choke-bore. We simply fell ravenously upon this supply of meat, for our hunger was getting quite serious. One feed of Kaffir corn a day and an occasional scrap of meat is poor fare to keep marching on.

Our new route led us too far from the river, so we—fearing to venture much further without the certainty of water ahead—turned to the left again and, passing through thick thorn bush, were glad once more to find ourselves on the banks of the river.

The country traversed during the last few days, with the decaying coarse vegetation left in the wake of the retreating water, caused us to think it advisable to take quinine as a preventative against malaria. Regularly every other day we consumed six grains, and when we had been passing through particularly obnoxious parts, we took the dose daily. Each night as we retired to rest the melodious coarse grunt of the hippos living in great numbers in the reeds lulled us to sleep. There is a ring of uncivilised wildness coupled to the notes of hippopotami that to my mind intensifies the sense of savagedom associated with the interior.

In one of the frequent creeks running inland many of our boys plunged over their heads into the water, thinking this to be shallow like the rest of these waters we were constantly cross-

ing. This was in a beautiful opening on the river banks we named 'May Flat' from its charming appearance. The boys had to return and wade across this creek higher up through half a mile of water reeds and rushes, and landed much exhausted on the dry ground on the opposite side.

A single letzwee grazing some distance off attracted my attention, and with a four hundred yards sight, as he would not let me get nearer, I was fortunate enough to bring him down. Great luck! here was a good feed for us all round. But our number, twenty-one in all, disposed of the lot in two hearty meals, and soon we were just as anxious as before to restock our larder.

The weather set in much cooler, with an east wind that sprang up and happily dissipated the mosquitoes. We passed several creeks daily, and saw many flocks of green pigeons and parrots, whose bright plumage gaily flashed and sparkled in the sunlight as they flew screaming and cooing from one large tree to another.

On the seventeenth of September, while passing as usual through much swamp and crossing many creeks, we came to a village on a knoll belonging to Moremi's people, who possessed the first troop of cattle we encountered since leaving Indala's. Owing to the nature of the country we were obliged again to take to the sand-belts to outflank a large creek running westward. A bad thorn forest had to be passed through here, composed principally of the *Waacht een beetje* thorn-trees, whose hooked thorns, arranged in opposite curves on the same branch, catch the unhappy passer-by in their toils whichever way he moves. The instinct, when caught by a thorn, is to halt and loosen one's-self carefully and then try to avoid the repetition of the occurrence. The *Waacht een beetje*, however, with diabolical accuracy, whenever it has 'hooked' a passer-by renders such attempts futile, for as soon as one has got free in one place, the thorns set in the opposite direction on the same branch invariably hook into some fresh part of the clothing, and at each move the neighbouring prehensile branches, set in motion by the move-

ment, seem to hook on from above and below, until apparently there is only one possible way out of the difficulty, and that is, to wrench oneself free at the expense of one's clothing and a succession of very pronounced and ugly scratches. Added to all this, the plant, with its light green foliage, hiding the vicious thorns in their friendly appearing verdure, seems to invite the touch by an outward display of attractiveness, never exposing on its exterior any sign of its disagreeable nature. Many a hard-pressed giraffe or buck owes its life to the friendly intervention of the Waacht een beetje tree, past which the hunter, all unsuspecting, has brushed in the hurry of the chase, to be held fast while the game vanishes over the belt.

Some three hours further on we came upon one of Moremi's hunters who had just shot an elephant close by. He told us that the troop to which this one belonged was very fierce, and that he had followed this elephant, which had been wounded in the first encounter, to here, where he had killed it; but not without much difficulty and some danger, for the beast had charged him several times. The other hunters who accompanied him had in the general attack made on the elephants killed nine more, some distance down the river where we should meet them. Elephants, he told us, were now extremely scarce, and when a troop wandered into this country the natives turned out in hundreds and organised a general hunt on behalf of the king, to whom all the ivory belonged.

The hunter's name was Okohru. He told us that ahead there was neither game nor corn, and that we would have a hard sixteen days tramp to the lake. This information induced us to purchase an ox from some natives living close by for seven pound in cash to take with us as provision on the road. Less they would not take. This brute, a fine beast, turned out so wild and fierce while being driven along that we were obliged to kill him at nightfall for fear that he would escape us altogether.

For the last five miles we had been splashing along half-way up to our waists in clear water which overspread the flat-lying country for a great distance inland, and noticing the trouble the

ox gave to our bearers to force him along, and as it was already late, we made for a flat island about two hundred yards long, projecting a few feet above the surface of the water, on which some fine trees were growing. Franz was close behind me driving Gonsalvus's pack-ox carrying ammunition, when I stepped on to the island. The second step I made brought me almost on the tail of a large leopard lying in hiding in the scrub which fringed the island down to the water's edge. With a bound and a grunt he cleared from almost beneath my feet, and took cover among some small bushy date palms, before I could bring the gun from my shoulder to bear on him. It was very unpleasant to think of him, probably accompanied by a mate, as sleeping companions on this small island for the night, especially as we feared for our two sole remaining goats, Blanche and her mother, now grown into such intimate fellowship with us that the thought of killing them for food seemed like sacrilege to us all.

As soon as the obstreperous ox was despatched by a shot in the brain, Hammar and I, leaving Franz to superintend the cutting up, with eight of the boys scoured the island from end to end over and over again, prodding into all the thickets with long poles, determined to get the leopard if possible. Leave the island without being seen the animal could not, for we were surrounded by a plain sheet of water; yet although we searched every nook and corner that could possibly shelter him, and also looked for holes in the earth which might afford a hiding-place, until darkness compelled us to desist, we could not find the beast. What he was doing as we approached the island at the outset was a question that puzzled me very much. He must have heard the plop, plop of our feet in the water as we came along, and it was hardly credible that he should have slept through such a commotion. Probably he had crawled to our landing-place in hopes of attacking the ox, quite ignoring our presence until startled by my nearer approach, and then fled. At any rate we took good care to tie our goats up amongst the sleeping bearers close to a large fire, and to suspend all the ox

meat, by ropes, from high branches in the trees under which we camped, to prevent the leopard from claiming a share. However, he never molested us in the least, and we passed the evening in cutting up biltong and feasting. The flavour of meat from a fat tender ox after our protracted dry game and corn diet came upon us like a luxurious revelation. It was so good that I am afraid we demolished more than was actually necessary, although our cast-iron digestions made light of such trifles as a few extra pounds weight of meat at a meal.

We remained on the island till the following afternoon, to give our biltong the chance of drying sufficiently to stand travelling, and then went on, first through water, as before, and finally passing through a thick camel-thorn mimosa forest growing on a sand-belt, where a small troop of rooi-buck fled from our approach beyond the possibility of pursuit.

With regard to the information given to us by the natives concerning distances, water, food, or any other circumstances connected with the trip, we found that they never by any possible chance made correct statements. If our guides wished to rest, they simply declared that there was some obstacle, such as a sand-belt, on ahead, that required a full day to encompass it; if they wished to go on, they claimed to know of corn in plenty on ahead at some village, which, spite of the accurate description given, never appeared in our route. Should the natives wish us to purchase and remain with them, then fearful obstacles were to be met with on the road that required a long rest to prepare one for the exertion, or, in the reverse case, a rosy picture was painted of the facilities on ahead. The statements they made were never based upon facts, but rather were prompted by their own desires; and in time, feeling that no information was better than wrong information, we ceased to inquire at all, and simply went on as circumstances moulded our inclinations. At the last kraal we passed we again heard tales of a white man with Matabele spies, still supposed to be wandering in the veldt, but what portent this ever-repeated news contained for us we at the time did not quite comprehend.

On September 20th we passed a large creek, and were told that it is from here that a road straight through the sand-belts turns off to Indala's, a fact we had not been made aware of as existing till now. During the next four miles we crossed a succession of creeks middle deep, with the water from the river running outwards towards the lower lying sand-belts on the west with a fairly strong stream. Two miles further on we came to a place called Nokane, but for what reason it bore that name did not appear, as there were no villages or habitations there. It probably indicates the spot where the river sends small streams out westwards, such as we had just crossed.

As I was marching in advance of the column, as usual, I suddenly saw several fires surrounded by numbers of natives, and, walking in amongst them, found that they were the party from Moremi's, over three hundred in number, who had killed the nine elephants mentioned previously. When the bearers came up, a spot was pointed out to us where we should camp, and, after we had eaten, a chief, who claimed to be Moremi's brother, came over and informed us that he had been sent out to arrest a white man who had Matabele spies with him, and that it was his duty to declare us all his prisoners; therefore we would have to go to the lake under his charge. The manners of this chief and all his followers were marked by great courtesy. They were gentle and very solicitous of our welfare, sending us huge bundles of elephants' biltong, hardly yet dry, as food, and attended to our comfort with all the hospitality at their disposal in the veldt. We informed the chief that we were already on our way to the lake to see the king, but without intention of spying out the country for Matabeles, or with any evil purposes. We were simply travellers.

In conversation, it transpired that this party had been specially delegated from the lake to meet us, as Intuhe had sent runners to the king informing him of our advent, and, in fact, we found that Intuhe had orders to arrest us himself; but, finding we were willing to go to the lake without any fuss, he, with much forethought, allowed us to travel by ourselves, and

remained behind to ascertain if there were any more white people following on our track, or otherwise drifting about in the neighbourhood. In return for the kindness of our captors, we gave them a few shirts and what other articles we could spare.

Amongst all our boys there were none who feared in any way that the arrest concerned them personally, and a general cheerfulness prevailed in our camp. Only the craven Franz, who acted as interpreter, showed such evident signs of being ill at ease that it gave the natives some reason for being suspicious of us.

We wished to make an early start next day, but the chief, firmly but kindly, informed us that he would now regulate the journey. Consequently we did not move till nine o'clock A.M., when the sun was already getting very warm. Before starting the chief called his head men together, and the party sang hymns under the forest trees. To us, after the rough treatment we had encountered from the natives behind, the voices of these worshippers, blended harmoniously in praise of the Almighty, though causing us considerable astonishment, sounded like a forerunner of peace and content that now should be our lot, for, being innocent of any intention of evil, we attached little importance to the fact of having been taken prisoners. So these natives were Christians here in the wild wastes of the middle of Africa! Much impressed, we mutually congratulated ourselves on having fallen into such worthy hands. However, we could not help but feel that there was a peculiar incongruity about the whole position that in a sense caused us to wonder why and how these people learned this religion! Were there white people at the lake, and how came the leaders of these people to be clothed after European fashion? To all our questions relative to these points we only received smiles as answers. They evidently were instructed to give us no information, or, perhaps, guided by native craft, objected to be 'pumped.'

When the morning's devotions were completed, the chief, mounting his horse, rode off accompanied by eight other horsemen, whose steeds had been hidden from our observation. It

appears that the chief kept the horses out of sight for strategic reasons best known to himself. However, we never saw him or the horsemen again until we reached the lake, but were left in charge of a chief called Tschukoorroo, who now took command of the expedition. Following the lead of our new guides, we made a good eleven miles over a dry sand-belt without water, where Hammar knocked up owing to the heat. We sent water back to him from a stream we arrived at, running outward from the river, twenty yards wide and two feet deep. Here we first heard the name Taugche applied to the Cubango, or rather what proved afterwards to be only a small branch of this river. In the evening Hammar managed to struggle on another few miles, and then we were obliged to stop, although the chief was still ahead and expected us to come to his camp. We sent a message on to him with the information that, owing to the state of affairs, we could not come on till the next day.

We were up betimes, and, taking advantage of the early cool, made a good march in a south direction before halting. It was a cool, cloudy day with an easterly breeze blowing. As we were proceeding in the afternoon a troop of five koodoo crossed our track, galloping one hundred and fifty yards ahead of us. Several shots I fired failed to bring anything down, although I felt certain that one was hit, yet the natives, who were not accustomed to see game shot in this way, only laughed at our desire to follow up, saying they had no time to waste, and so we went on. This day we passed a fine mimosa forest, composed of by far the largest trees we had ever seen; usually much smaller, many of them were much over thirty feet high, spreading their flat crowns broadly towards each other.

CHAPTER XXII

Lose our last goats in the enormous swamps on the route—Native with ostrich feathers—Scene of battle between Matabele and Moremi's people—Invasion of the Matabele—Da Tapo the Brave repulses Matabele—Matabele attack the Batowaana—Their strongholds—The island in the reeds—Chief Tschukoorroo beats slave for theft—Long walk across a sand-belt—Large herds of cattle and much milk—Malarial germs supposed to be in milk—Our surprise at finding well-dressed natives—Reach the lake—Palaver with suspicious chiefs—Natives wish to murder us in cold blood during the night, but are prevented by Mashabie—Stremboom and Umkook—March into King's kraal amid fearful excitement of native women, and are tried—Saved by a child—Paul's danger—Hammar's foot.

THE country we passed through after this was one intricate labyrinth of swamp, with many small streams running outward from the river into the sandy wastes on the south-west. Where all this water goes to is a mystery, but it seemed as if a good part of the Cubango had spent itself already in supplying water to the swamps that must exist in that direction. We struggled and floundered along from creek to creek without intermission throughout the day, and all of us were very tired with the exertion; the pack ox and our remaining two goats were completely exhausted, and those of the boys who came in last brought the news that unless we wished to leave the goats behind it would be better to kill them. What a fate for those poor creatures after accompanying us through all the vicissitudes of our long journey from Panda Matenga, to be left to the mercies of crocodiles in the swamp! Reluctantly I gave the order to despatch them. But when the boys went on the back track to look for them they had disappeared, probably stolen by some of the natives. It was a great relief to us that after all they had not to meet their fate at our hands.

A mounted native of Moremi's tribe overtook us, carrying

some beautiful plumes of ostriches he had shot in the desert to the west. We were anxious to purchase these, but he asked such an exorbitant price in cash that we thought better of the bargain. I was anxious to hire his horse for Hammar to ride on to the lake, but again his exorbitant demands made the transaction quite an impossibility.

The lake contingent had passed us in the swamps, for our boys, laden with their packs, could by no means keep pace with those people, who were mostly carrying only light loads of elephant biltong, and simply trotted away from us. 'Tschukoor-roo'—the Rhinoceros—the chief, proved to be a distant relation of Moremi's. He had sent two of his men back to guide and watch us through the swamps, who were much distressed because their 'mussinan'—servant—had got lost or bolted with their effects he was carrying. Telling us to go on, they set out to hunt for the truant, with dire threats of how badly he should fare if they found the slave. This was the last we saw of them, and in reality we were now prisoners at large, but with as little hope of escaping, even if such had been our intention, as if we had been under lock and key. Where could we have taken refuge in the hundreds of miles of waste land surrounding us on all sides, without being followed up, and probably subjected to severe indignities when caught, and with the certainty before us that any such attempt on our part would materially aggravate our position?

This night we slept at the scene of battle between Moremi's flying people and the pursuing Matabele, who, the previous year, had invaded the country in large force, following up the lake people, who, with cattle, women, and children, hastened to take refuge on islands in the swamp and reeds, of which they alone knew the secrets of the narrow passages of access, while the rest of the island's circumference was surrounded by matted reeds and deep water. We were told, at one of the creeks we crossed up to our armpits in water, that this was the only place where there was footing for many miles on either side, and that the flying natives, headed by their fighting general, Da Tapo,

knowing this, made a determined stand here against the Matabele, and slew many of them while struggling in the water in the attempt to cross after them. This stand of Da Tapo's gave the flying women and children time to follow on the track of their lords and masters, who had gone ahead with the large troops of cattle to secrete them in the islands lying in the reeds of the Cubango higher up.

The way this flight was conducted, and the heartrending scenes enacted during this terrible stampede were graphically described to us by Tschukooroo. The men had passed ahead with the larger cattle in great troops, leaving the care of children, sheep, and goats to the women following on behind. The whole tribe took part in the flight, many women so overburdened with goods and children that other little toddlers of three and four years old had to look after themselves. It was surprising to see those youngsters without a cry or scream determinedly hurry on in the wake of their parents, no one assisting or sustaining them except at the deeper crossings in the swamps, where a few men stationed themselves to help them over. Tschukooroo related with a great deal of feeling how many of those plucky youngsters were drowned in the swamps, or quite exhausted, and, not able to carry their fat little bodies any further, were overtaken and slit open by the Matabele warriors with a cruel thrust of their assegais that let their entrails drop on to the ground, and left to die in great agony. It was then that the brave Da Tapo, hearing of the distress in the rear, left his cattle in charge of a friend and rushed back with a handful of self-sacrificing men to check the advancing Matabele horde, that they had not until now realised was actually so close on their heels. It was late in the afternoon when Da Tapo met that part of the Matabele army which had passed Moremi and his seventy horsemen employed at the extreme rear in checking the advance of the main body of Matabele. Ireful at seeing the cruelties perpetrated on the children, Da Tapo and his men ambushed the crossing spoken of, and when the enemy were

in full force, many floundering out of their depth in the water, while trying to cross, Da Tapo opened fire on them with breechloading rifles, slaying all those in the water, and bringing the rest to an effectual standstill.

Tschukoorroo, who fought with Da Tapo, said that the Matabele were quite surprised at the effect of their fire, and drew back a little from the drift, shouting vengeance when the main body should come up. Da Tapo and his warriors were not behind at invective, and challenged them to come on at once, taunting them with cowardice, an insult the Matabele least can brook, and hoping that their foes, who were bad swimmers and almost helpless in the water, would make a rush for the crossing-place again, and thus get into difficulties in the deep water on either side of the drift. Infuriated at last, the Matabele made the expected rush, when, to encourage them further, Da Tapo and his men, with well-assumed fear pretended to fly, causing nearly all the Matabele there to scramble into the water in chase. Well assured that they were now at their mercy, Da Tapo and his men rushed back to the bank and opened fire on the helpless mass, killing all they could in the short time before the Matabele could return to their side of the stream.

Loud and long was the derision hurled after the retiring Matabele by Da Tapo, who, overjoyed at the success of his stratagem, made a camp at the drift, intending to hold the position against all comers as long as it was necessary, and his ammunition held out. He killed for his people an ox that had been left behind exhausted, and, lighting a huge fire derisively invited the Matabele to come and feast with him, as they must surely be hungry, pointing out that the meat they had already killed—the children—was not fit food for even Matabele stomachs, although they could not understand for what other purpose they, the brave Amatabele, had butchered such little innocents. The Matabele, who really were in great straits from hunger, foiled in their attempt to get cattle, came to the drift, and smoking their 'dacha' pipes to

gain inspiration, shouted back many curses and threats at Da Tapo, who, towards morning, relinquished his post and followed on the track of his tribe, who, by his timely intervention, had now made good their escape.

Moremi and his mounted men had meanwhile held the main body of the advancing Matabele in check at the lake, killing many at the crossings of the river nearer his town, until, overwhelmed by numbers, for the Matabele army was over twelve thousand strong, they fell back on the tribe, who meanwhile had safely crossed with the cattle, women, and children on to some large islands in the reeds, with open deep water in front of them, by some circuitous route known only to themselves, leaving the Matabele in possession of all their stores of corn, which they foolishly set fire to and burnt, and a few goats and fat-tailed, sheep that were too slow of speed to accompany the flight.

The Matabele followed them up sharply, and when they reached the bank opposite the islands on which they could hear the cattle lowing, and see the Batowaana, as Moremi's people are called, calmly preparing food for themselves, their rage knew no bounds. They attempted to swim over to the island, but were received with such a withering fire from the breechloaders that they were glad to retire, and resume the attack at night.

The Batowaana, enjoying their discomfiture, held up pieces of meat they were cooking, telling them to come and fetch it, as they surely must be hungry after their long journey, and in other ways sought by taunts to precipitate another attack while daylight lasted. In the coarsest language the Matabele answered, while the 'dacha' they smoked, firing their rage to the utmost, caused them to direct their remarks principally to the women, who should have to suffer for their discomfiture when those cowards, their husbands, who fought like monkeys from behind bushes, had been comfortably disposed of.

Three times the bold Matabele attempted to storm the

islands that night, but met with such severe treatment each time, that they were glad to retire. Between the assaults they smoked their dacha pipes, shouting out that this was sufficient food for warriors of their stamp, and, dancing the war dance, tried to intimidate their enemies. After the third attack, however, when day dawned, there was not a live Matabele in sight. They had retired beaten, to hurry home before starvation ended the work so well commenced by Moremi's men with their breechloading guns. No wonder these events, of which I shall give the salient points later, should have created an implacable hatred for the Matabele amongst the Batowaana which sufficiently accounted for the anxiety those people displayed to prevent any spies from searching out the secrets of their strongholds in the reeds of the Cubango.

At last we were clear of the worst part of the dreadful swamps, and camped at a village teeming with herds of cattle of the large-horned breed common to the Kalahari country. We bought some milk and drank this wholesome beverage in place of food, as we had none left.

During the next thirteen miles we passed only one 'Molapo,' signifying wet valley or creek, and camped at another, which, we were informed, was the last we should cross before reaching the lake. Tschukoorroo, who had waited here for us, assisted by some of his companions, gave one of his slaves a beating, the equal of which I never witnessed for severity. The man had traded away some of the elephant biltong he was carrying to another native *en route*, and when he reached camp his misdemeanour was discovered. Four of Tschukoorroo's men and himself took the culprit to a large Waacht een beetje tree standing near, with branches reaching to the ground. On one side of this tree they formed a half circle, keeping the culprit inside backed by the tree. With strong sharp whips ('sjamboks') of hippo hide they started to belabour him, telling him meanwhile that if he could make his way out he might go free. Thrashing him unmercifully, each stroke of the sjambok lifting the skin

from his bare body with the tip, they compelled him in despair to rush for the tree, then caught by the thorns they belaboured the poor brute until he fell into a dead faint, when they dragged him out of the tree and let him lie until it was time to start again. A few strokes of the sjambok revived him when he was wanted to go on, and he took his place amongst the others and proceeded on the journey.

While talking of shooting, Tschukoorroo, who rather fancied himself as a shot, challenged me to a three-round competition provided that I should supply the cartridges. Of course he did not win, but he took his defeat smilingly, and faithfully paid me the goat we had arranged should be the stake, later on.

For some reason he decided to remain with our party during one march, when we, to reach water some distance ahead, required to walk at night. He divested himself of all his clothing but a shirt, and, taking a stick, requested me to walk with him. We waited till after the others had all gone ahead, when he told me to come along; the first half-mile he went but slowly in the dark, dancing the elephant dance, and singing the elephant song, of which I was sorry not to be able to understand more, or see the main features, as the song consisted of a quiet chant like all Kaffir melodies, with an acme point of shouts in which the word 'Materebetzi' was conspicuous, accompanied by many whirling leaps into the air. It seems that Tschukoorroo, the doughty little hunter, had distinguished himself conspicuously during the killing of the elephants, and now found it necessary to evaporate his accumulated joy or vanity in this by no means unusual manner.

When he had finished his dance he buckled to, and gave me a lead for ten miles at a pace that he thought would knock me up, passing all the others on the line of march till we were far ahead. I managed to keep up to him all right without much difficulty, at which he appeared disappointed, and asked if I was not tired, a fact leading me to believe that he intended

to make me smart for his defeat at shooting. He was a charming though vain little fellow, and very cheerful, offering to carry my gun part of the march, and otherwise showing that he had a kindly heart.

We were told by the chief that before us was a long dry sand-belt, without water, which would take a two days' march to cross. He therefore advised us to rest at this last water where we were camped for a while, and to travel during the night, especially as it was moonlight part of the night, and to take sufficient water with us to last on the road for use on the following day. Fully believing the tale, which was exaggerated, as usual, to increase our efforts, we waited till three o'clock in the afternoon, when Tschukoorroo's party started, leaving us to follow on the footpath which they pointed out to us as the road we had to take, at our leisure. Preparing for a long walk, I divested myself of my lower garments to give my legs free play, and filling one of the casks that held twenty pints of water, which I slung over my shoulder, to give the boys a drink in the sand-belt, I started off, carrying my rifle over the other shoulder, at four o'clock precisely. Incited by the possible day of thirst before us, I determined to carry my cask as far forward as possible, and kept pegging along in the moonlight until near eleven o'clock, when, looking at my watch, I thought it time to stop, and halted in a little open glade in the belt. By lying down I tried to get a little sleep, but just as I closed my eyes, the thought of lions involuntarily struck me, and ludicrous as it may seem, it appeared to me, without actual reason, as if an object had moved along the path in the rear. I was up in a moment, but it proved to be only my imagination that had played this trick, and again I lay down, but only to watch each tuft of grass and bush that seemed to grow into life and move as I lay. It was useless trying to rest in a recumbent position, for my imagination played such pranks that, at last, I stood upright against a tree and waited the arrival of Hammar and the bearers. At one o'clock Hammar and Franz came along, the

former very indignant at the distance I had travelled, not without some reason, for it was a long march. At four o'clock A.M. the last of the bearers came up, and then, giving each one a drink out of the cask, and imbibing our share also, I emptied the remainder into a small kettle we had, and marched on, taking the cask with me, intending, if any one knocked up on the journey, to send it back filled from the water ahead. At nine o'clock, to my surprise, I found the sand-belt dwindling away, and came face to face with the reeds of the Taugche, a branch of the Cubango river. Thus, in twelve hours' actual walking, I had crossed the sand-belt alleged to be a two days' hard march. Of course, there was no necessity to send or carry water back, so I quietly walked on a little distance to a Batowaana village near by, where there were enormous herds of cattle grazing in the neighbourhood, just freed from the kraal in which they had rested overnight.

Tschukoorroo was camped here, and received me laughingly, asking where the others were. He called upon the women of the village to bring me milk, and some boiled corn, an order they amiably complied with, and jokingly asked if I was a Matabele. Later in the day Hammar and Franz came up, and at mid-day all the boys arrived, whereupon, to recompense them for the forced march, I bought an ox for five pounds of powder, our last bag, and we held a small feast, of course dividing the meat with Tschukoorroo, and presenting a shoulder to the owner of the kraal, to comply with the recognised custom amongst natives. The women inundated us with milk in exchange for a few coloured cotton handkerchiefs still in our possession; and when we refused to barter any more, they simply filled our calabashes, and told us to drink, as we must be hungry, while they had plenty. Such charming behaviour quieted any mild misgivings we had with regard to our captivity, and so far it appeared like a huge joke to us. The women spoke freely of the Matabele who had treated their children so cruelly last year, and we sympathised with them so sincerely that all feeling of distrust vanished amongst them. For a handkerchief we bought a little earthy mixture

containing salt, the first we had tasted for many months, for our supply had been accidentally sacrificed in the retreat from Kikonto, on the Liana river.

A westerly hot wind in the evening brought a change in the weather that looked like rain. But this passed off, without fulfilling the threat, heralded by several vivid flashes of lightning, followed by heavy crashes of thunder.

We all disposed of such quantities of milk that we actually became scared at the possible results, and warned the boys to desist; but when I found Hammar secretly taking a vessel filled with milk into the seclusion of his mosquito-net at night with him, I took it away. He had already, since mid-day, absorbed sixteen pannikins, full, to his own share, besides a good portion of beef, and I had done rather more, but, being a larger man, considered myself privileged; but that was no reason why Hammar should make himself ill. Nothing, however, but a comfortable feeling of careless satiety happened to either of us; yet, in after life, we have often discussed the possibility of having made a mistake in counting the quantity of milk we drank this day, for such a feat appeared beyond human capacity under ordinary circumstances, but we always arrived at the conclusion that there was no error in the tally. We had actually done it, nor experienced any ill effects afterwards either; a fact that caused many of the fever-ridden people we met later, to shrug their shoulders in horror and disbelief at our story, as, from experience, they asserted that milk is one of the most fever-producing diets imaginable. There is also a belief amongst whites in the interior, that all vegetables and fruit growing near or on the ground are fever producers; and I, myself, have observed amongst them that the consumption of a cupful of milk or sweet potatoes, pistachio nuts or pumpkins, was often followed by an attack of fever. All these, however, were cases in which the consumers were already fever subjects, as, indeed, are almost all white persons who have travelled much in the interior. The extra attack of fever was probably brought about by an aggravation of the symptoms in an already diseased system, and the diet should

not be considered the primary cause of the illness. Yet there is a reasonable amount of argument in the idea that malarial germs will settle on, and even penetrate into, moist edibles lying on or near the ground, and the same argument may be applied to the udder and teats of a cow, that brush constantly against the rank vegetation in which they seek their nourishment. Our daily doses of quinine, however, kept us perfectly protected against any attacks of fever.

We rested all the following day, and next morning, September 27th, Tschukoorroo, who was camped two miles ahead, sent to tell us to come on, as it was a cool, cloudy day, very favourable for travelling. We found him waiting for us; and, going some distance on, we came to a running stream, forty yards wide, and four feet deep, which Tschukoorroo wrongly told us, with three smaller, similar streams on ahead, that we crossed within the next six miles, was all that was left of the Cubango. At the last of these streams, he told us that we again had a formidable sand-belt to cross, and the next water we should see would be Lake Ngape (Ngami). Filling our casks as before, we made eleven miles into the sand-belt, along a well-beaten wagon track, and also passed a wagon outspanned. Here were signs of civilisation indeed, where we expected to be in the wilds of Africa: the natives courteous, the better classes dressed in European clothing, some mounted on horses, and armed with a good pattern of No. 2 musket, breechloading rifles, and in possession of wagons above all things! All this inspired us with great curiosity. The country we passed was a succession of sand-belts grown over with small minosa, and clay laagtes producing somewhat larger minosa and many foliage trees. There were no huts or villages along this route.

September the 29th, Monday. I marched ahead with Tschukoorroo's men, talking to a well-clothed, tall Batowaana, who had joined the party the previous evening. He volunteered to carry my gun, and led me ahead of the rest, through the open wood, leaving a clear track in the sand that the others might follow. Without my knowing it, Tschukoorroo and all his people,

who allowed us to get ahead, branched off, and after we had gone nine miles we came to a sand dune, rising rapidly fifty feet high or more, when my companion, handing me the gun, pointed forward, and told me to go 'that way'; then, turning off to the left, he disappeared amongst the trees. On looking around, I was much surprised to find myself quite alone, without any sign of Tschukoorroo's men, whom I had thought to be close behind a short while ago. However, taking my guide's advice, I crossed over the apex of the sand dune, and saw a reedy, rush-grown, expansive plain stretched out before me, that proved to be Lake Ngami. I walked down to the water for a drink, and then proceeded slowly along the sandy shore of the lake, here fringed by trees for a mile or more, and, finding a large shady tree, I lay down under it, and waited for the rest of the expedition, who, following my track, made clear intentionally in the sand by my deserted guide, came up later, and we camped under the tree. We noticed many men riding about on pack oxen, and guiding their mounts by a stout string fixed through the septum of the nose. I bought a beautiful otter skin from one of these travellers for a coloured cotton handkerchief.

While we were waiting, three delegates from the king came in the afternoon to question us regarding our presence in the country, demanding to know the reason of our exploring the back part of Moremi's Land, and mentioned that they had heard we had Matabele people with us, whom we were guiding to show them the secret passages to Moremi's strongholds in the reeds. A report had come in from Khama at Shoshong that a white man had undertaken to ferret out the secrets of their hidden crossings to the islands, for Lobengula of Matabeleland, who had promised him a high reward in cattle if he were successful. In answer we told them the plain unvarnished tale of our journey, emphasising the fact that we had never been near the Matabele king's towns, and only had passed through the western portion of that country, *viâ* Makarikari to Panda Matenga. They still were very suspicious, and questioned our boys minutely with regard to our movements and intentions, and asked how it

was that we had men with us who spoke the Matabele (Zulu) tongue, at which the unfortunate Paul and Styrman, the Makalaka, looked anything but comfortable. The fact of having these two men with us told heavily against their accepting our tale. They commenced to examine our boys separately, sending the others out of earshot to get more accurately at the facts of the case, which we did not understand.

Two of the three chiefs had come to us with their minds fully made up to condemn us at once, excitedly saying that all our tales were preconcerted lies; lies, and nothing but lies. But the third one, a tall man, to whom all honour and credit is due, insisted on a rigorous examination being carried out before forming an opinion. Of course our boys from Swangie's could only tell their tale as they knew it, giving the history of our arrival at Panda Matenga with Franz and the two Mongwato boys, who had returned to Shoshong. They also told how Paul and Styrman, having lived many years in their midst, came to join the harmless expedition. The tall chief, questioning Chiki at the time, said, 'If you are Swangie's people, surely there are some of you who must have visited the King Lebossi at Lee-a-Lui, and can tell about him and his doings.' The question was a leader of deep meaning, which Chiki, by good fortune, was able to understand and answer to the full, as he himself had been at Lee-a-Lui. He answered, 'O chief Mashabie (mentioning, to his great surprise, the chief's name), well do I and my mate, Sjambok, know you, who often came to Lee-a-Lui with messages and presents from the Batowaana king to Lebossi. Did you not once bring a horse for Lebossi? And the sister of Moremi to be Lebossi's wife?' Mashabie was much struck by the answer, and called for Sjambok, who gave him the same reply. This fortunate coincidence convinced Mashabie that, at least, these two boys were trustworthy, and he spoke long and earnestly with them. Still the other chiefs were unconvinced, so strongly were they influenced by their fear of the Matabele misdeeds that had left their marks on the very core of the nation. Mashabie and the other chiefs at last

went off to report the result of their interview to the king. We knew not until afterwards how intense the excitement was in Moremi's town. The grand council of chiefs received Mashabie's explanation with instincts all deeply prejudiced against us by the evil tales of our false intentions towards the nation which had preceded us. Great was the outcry to sweep us off the face of the earth at one blow. But Mashabie, who was convinced of our innocence, boldly stood up and harangued the people in our favour, and a few of the more reserved and careful chiefs, impressed by his convincing manner, helped to support his arguments. But the opposition, headed by the redoubtable warrior, Da Tapo, who had great power, howled for our immediate destruction, and shouted to the king to give the order to kill. John Stremboom, a white trader, residing at the lake, although quite a stranger to us, joined Mashabie, and pleaded with the king for our lives. He advised the king to do nothing rash, as white men's lives should be sacred until there was no doubt of their guilt. It would be a terrible injustice to kill us until they were unanimously convinced, without question, on the point of our guilt. Should we prove guilty, then he, Stremboom, would even assist them at our execution, and would take care that the white people outside should be informed of the reason for our death; but, meanwhile, to-morrow was as good as to-day for the execution. The killing of white men required great forethought and care. He had to stand beside the king, and, actually, once or twice held him down in his seat, as, inspired by the shouts of his warriors demanding our death, the king was on the point of springing up to give the order to kill.

Umkook, a black missionary hailing from America, joined his voice to Mashabie's and Stremboom's, and kept the young king within bounds. The council lasted nearly all night, and Mashabie, Stremboom, and Umkook remained trying to pacify the excited natives, especially Da Tapo, who at times during the proceedings excitedly announced his intention of killing the lot of us right off, order or no order, and, calling on his mates to follow him, was only held back by main force. Then some

other chief, fired by the recollections of the wrongs he had suffered, would start off to gather his men for the same purpose, but again was held by the champions of justice. Stremboom, whom we met later, gave us an account of all that took place that night, telling us that several times he despaired of saving our lives, so wild and excited did the proceedings wax, till, daylight appearing, the chiefs consented to give the prisoners a fair trial. Satisfied with the king's promise that a trial should take place, Stremboom and Umkook retired to rest, unfortunately to oversleep themselves next day. The reason lying at the bottom of all this fuss was explained later by the fact that last year a white man, while travelling on the road from Lake Ngami to Mongwato, with five hundred slaughter cattle he had traded and was taking out for sale, met the advancing Matabele army, who, in great straits for food, had seized his cattle and devoured the lot. The white man immediately proceeded to Lobengula for redress, and it was related how this king promised him the number of his cattle doubled provided he would return and discover the hidden passages in the reeds utilised by the Batowaana to secrete their cattle in times of danger. This transaction of Lobengula's had been reported to Khama by one of his spies at Lobengula's court, and Khama had forwarded, as a matter of friendship, the message on to the Batowaana, who are a remote branch of his tribe. It was not reported that this white man had actually started on his tour of investigation, and I do not believe that any of the interior hunters or travellers would lend themselves to so foul a plot for the benefit of Lobengula or any other native king. But the suspicious instincts of the Batowaana were awakened wide by the tale, and, inflamed by their recent horrible experiences of Matabele ferocity, they fully believed that the white man had undertaken to carry out this nefarious proposition; and therefore small blame can be attached to them for visiting the full weight of their suspicions and wrath on us, who had gone through the back part of their country at this excitable time, mapping out with mysterious instruments (sextant, etc.) a new course hitherto

untravelling by white men, without the consent or knowledge of their king, an act in itself leading to suspicious inferences at the best of times. To them the explanation we gave of being simply travellers who were neither hunters nor traders seemed on the face of it so ridiculous an excuse that they never believed such unprofitable undertakings possible. This fact told heaviest of all against us; we must be spies and our tales all lies. We could be in the country for no good, and these fairly reasonable arguments nearly cost us our lives.

In the early evening Mashabie returned to our camp with a man who, we thought afterwards, might have been the king, although he denied it when asked later. They sat and talked a little while with us, and then the stranger ordered us to remain camped at the base of the tree, and not to venture beyond the distance the shadow fell. This ominous order aroused my suspicions that all was not right, although Hammar was of the opposite opinion. I therefore went about one hundred yards away and pitched my mosquito tent by itself, and there slept alone, for the reason that if they wanted me personally they could have me without any trouble, and also in order to be out of the way of a possible salvo fired promiscuously into the camp from the neighbouring thicket. Any attempt at self-defence was out of the question against a tribe of five thousand warriors. Therefore our only hope of safety lay in cool submission.

How correctly I had summed up the position, Stremboom's tale too clearly demonstrated. Our fate that night hung on the noble exertions of the disinterested Mashabie, Stremboom and Umkook. Of all the trouble that happened at the king's kraal of course we knew nothing till later, but I gathered from the disappearance of several useful articles early in the evening, such as pots, etc., that we were looked upon as a party from whom effects could be taken with impunity, a not re-assuring circumstance for men in our position.

We were up with the daybreak, and while preparing our breakfast, shot from the flocks of duck swarming on the borders of the lake, a message came to us from the king to hold our-

selves in readiness to march into the kraal at a moment's notice, for as soon as Tschukoorroo had been before the council to report his portion of our affairs, we were to be marched in. The morning was cool and cloudy. Half an hour later we were ordered by an excited messenger to hurry up at once, as the council was waiting for us. Half a mile ahead we were joined by an armed force who were huddled in a dense mass to receive us. As they proceeded we fell into line in their rear, Hammar and I walking abreast carrying our guns, with the boys under their loads marching two and two behind us.

The hunters announced our arrival by an irregular fusilade of shots, which was answered by the shrill screams of several thousand women, who with their children came hurrying towards us, anathematising the cursed Matabele spies. 'Yehlla la, la, la, la, la! we will to-day see the blood of the Matabele who killed our children. Hoo, hoo, where is your boasted courage? Hoo, hoo, where your dacha pipe to-day? Yella, la, la, la, la, la, kill them, kill them at once! Where is my little child that you killed with your assegai? can you give it back? Hi, hau, yella, la, la, la, la, la, la!' and some of the excited females dashed at our poor boys, digging at them with their blunt knives, and would inevitably have killed them had not the escort, seeing the danger, surrounded them, and kept the infuriated women off.

From the experiences of that day it looked as if being torn to pieces by lions would be mere diversion compared to the fate of being left to the mercies of these infuriated, almost maddened, women.

Shots were going off all round us in exultation at our capture. Yelling and screaming women, with the sluices of their grief freshly opened, goading them to madness, frenziedly demanded our deaths, and they would have with their blunt knives made short work of us, but for the protection afforded by the escort. We agreed that the best policy was to appear indifferent to the whole scene; and, handing our guns to the bearers to carry, to show our carelessness, we lighted our pipes

and marched conversing behind the escort into the centre of the town, where stood the Kodthla or council circle, fenced in by long poles, set at an inward angle to prevent any misdemeanant from escaping while under trial, by climbing out. On a chair seated near the centre of it sat Moremi the king, a young man of twenty-four years of age at most, dressed in black clothes, with a dirty linen shirt front, a magnificent ostrich plume adorning his bowler hat, and a pair of patent leather shoes setting his stockingless feet off to the best advantage. He was surrounded



KING MOREMI

by his thirty councillors, who viewed our approach with unfriendly countenances. Unabashed, Hammar and I walked up to the king, and held out our hands for him to shake, which he, not knowing how to refuse, took sheepishly, and with a cold contact dropped again, whereupon we retired and seated ourselves by our boys some yards off under a single tree in the Kodthla.

Tschukoorroo was now called, and crouching before the king was questioned with regard to our doings, how he had captured us, etc., etc.; to all of which he gave answers that we, not being masters of the language, of course could not understand, nor could we get Franz to interpret what was going on of so much importance to us. All he would bring over his parched lips in a hoarse dry whisper was, 'Baas, be still, please be still,' as he thought it against the rules to speak before the king while the inquiry was going on, in which presumption he was correct so far as it concerned those who understood the language. But in cases where an interpreter is used it is quite permissible for him to relate the incidents as they transpire in an undertone to his principal. When the king was finished with Tschukoorroo, another salvo was fired, and we were ordered to come nearer to the council. Asking permission to sit, as we objected to crouch, we brought our seats forward and sat down, with Franz, who was to act as interpreter, kneeling by us. He was in such an unpardonable 'funk' that his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth, and he could not speak to answer the questions the king put to us. He simply knelt there and stammered, at which the more antagonistic chiefs gave several triumphant grunts, and looked exultingly at us. There is no evidence amongst natives that carries so much weight as fright. They argue, if a man has a free conscience his bearing will show it, and the reverse in the other case. Paul would have done excellently as interpreter, but, being implicated, we dared not use him.

Pushing Franz on one side, I asked in the best Sesutu I could muster for another interpreter, pointing out Franz's defects in that direction. More than fortunately there was another coloured man, called Marteens, residing at the king's kraal, who had but lately arrived from Shoshong, and spoke Dutch well. He was sent for and the business proceeded. The same questions were put to us as on the previous day by Mashabie: What were we doing at the back of the king's country? Why were we making maps? What was that mysterious thing that

Hammar looked through at the reflection of the sun and stars in a little iron box containing water that looked like molten lead, whilst I looked in a wooden box, and when Hammar shouted I wrote something down on a piece of paper?—the process of taking observations with sextant, chronometer, and artificial horizon. It took us long to explain these circumstances, but when Hammar volunteered to produce the mystic articles in question to prove their harmlessness, he was hastily informed that it was not necessary at all, they believed him on his word. Something now passed between Marteens and the king which we did not understand; all we saw was that a messenger was hastily despatched, who returned later with a little girl, the daughter of Marteens, just five years old. Meanwhile the king told us that we had done very wrong to come into his country by a back way. To which we replied that we were not responsible for having entered his country at all, for our intention, as we had told him, and he knew from Intuhe's people, was to go to the West Coast. We had not left the Chobe banks at all to spy into the Cubango's course near his boundary—a lucky thing for us that we left the connecting stream between the rivers alone, or our fate would probably have been sealed in any case—until we made for Indala's from the Chobe, a country that lay beyond his line. Our boys were also cross-questioned, and as our separate representations did not waver a hair's breadth, a current seemed to set in in our favour, except in the ferocious heart of staunch old Da Tapo, who only growled out that we deserved killing; else what were Paul and Styрман doing with us? Our whole tale was lies.

I may point out that if there had been any discrepancy in our tales, or if there had been any alteration in our story from yesterday's statements, these facts would have complicated our position most seriously.

Suddenly a little white man appeared in the Kodthla, who took Da Tapo by the arm and walked him off out of the council, holding him in a friendly manner by the arm.

Marteens' daughter was now brought before the king, who

fondled her between his knees and managed to extract a few shy words out of her in response to some questions he put. The whole thing dawned upon me like a flash; surely that was one of the children I had vaccinated at Shoshong, who had meanwhile been brought up here by her parents, and the king was now questioning the child if she knew us. Apparently he was quite satisfied with her answers, for with the words, 'Children do not lie, you are free and can go,' he politely rose, and taking off his hat proffered his hand, which we took and gave a hearty shake. However, there was a rider: Paul and Styrman should stay behind with them. Knowing full well the import of this step, I begged the king to reconsider his decision, but he gave the words, 'the king has spoken,' and told us to go. To desert my good Paul in his hour of need never struck me for a moment, so I answered, 'Well, the king has spoken, and I now speak. The men are as innocent as we are. Where they stop I stop; keep us all or let us go together.' Paul did a thing that probably greatly influenced the king at this moment. He rose and stretched himself, saying, 'Baas, I am only a servant, if the king wishes my life he must have it; do not anger the king for my sake. Let me remain so you are safe. Loop maar; alles ist recht (go on, all is right).' Fortunately at this juncture the white man we had seen before, who had so coolly walked away with the antagonistic Da Tapo, Stremboom himself in fact, came on the scene, and, realising the position, said to the king: 'Let the men go, you can always get them later if you require them,' an argument that appealed to the king, who thereupon went off, leaving us in the hands of Stremboom. We looked at each other and, smiled somewhat foolishly, I expect, and then introduced ourselves. Stremboom, a short little man with the heart of a lion, immediately invited us to his domicile, and apologised for his late appearance, under the plea that he had been up all night keeping the natives from attacking us.

We had not gone far when the clatter of hoofs behind caused us to turn and look round. It was the king who came up to apologise for the inconvenience he had caused us, and said that

he hoped we would bear him no ill-will for the part he took in our trial, or write about it in books, because he only wished to protect himself against his enemies. The current of thought that prompted this gentlemanly act gained our highest esteem, and we told the king that he had done perfectly right in holding an investigation, and thanked him for the kind way in which he had treated us at the trial. Stremboom, triumphant that his efforts to have a proper investigation had borne such successful fruit, reminded the king, in his own language, of something that we did not understand which had occurred during the night; whereat the king laughed somewhat sheepishly, and rode off at a gallop homewards.

Three miles further on we crossed a twenty feet deep clear stream, eighty yards wide, in large canoes, and mounting a



STREMBOOM'S FACTORY AT LAKE NGAMI

hundred feet incline reached Stremboom's hut a few hundred yards further on, where he welcomed us into his private apartments.

Hammar threw himself on to some sacks in evident great relief, and pointing to his foot swore a great oath that nothing on earth should induce him to walk another step now until his hurt was healed. Like a recollection of guilt the thought came over me how I had forgotten all about his foot, and neglected him on the irritating marches through the wearying swamps and over dreary sand-belts, while Hammar, with the welfare of the expedition at heart, had, with a heroism only known to those who have suffered it, struggled bravely on and on, each step costing him a pain I shrink to think of, without even a hint at his condition or a word of complaint. Hastily I pulled

off his boot, and the festering rags that covered the limb, exposing to view a raw, granulating, bleeding sore that encompassed the whole sole and part of the sides of his foot. Seldom have I been moved so keenly as at the sight of that foot.

Before we had rested long, a messenger arrived from the king bringing us a large fat ox for food, with Moremi's compliments, saying we must be hungry after our long tramp, and Stremboom baked us a loaf of bread made from real flour, the first we had seen for many a month. As a matter of curiosity I mounted the scales and weighed myself, to note the advance in condition sure to take place shortly. The scale turned at one hundred and ninety-eight pounds, my lowest weight for many years, for I was now as lean as a greyhound in full training. Three days later the scale rose cheerfully at two hundred and twelve pounds, while Hammar had gained nine pounds in the same time.

CHAPTER XXIII

Paul maltreated—Rest—King Moremi the inquisitive—How the King and his tribe were baptized and the result—Native religion—I intrigue against Indala—About the Batowaana or Baros.

OUR difficulties regarding Paul and Styрман were not over yet, for on the following day Mashabie came and demanded that they should be sent over to the council. For Styрман we feared little, as his principal fault lay in the fact that he knew how to speak the Matabele language, while by many tattoo marks characteristic of his tribe, that ornamented his body, and thanks to the statement of his innocence made by Chiki and his fellows, he should be able to convince the Batowaana in a cool moment of his harmlessness. The fact that he belonged to a tribe living near the western disputed borders of the Matabele, to whom as well as the Barotzi these people paid tribute to ensure themselves a peaceful existence, was all in his favour. With Paul, however, it was another matter. He had the large perforation in the lower lobe of his ears, a distinguishing mark, common to the Zulus and Matabele, who are a branch of the great Zulu nation, alike, inflicted on him as a child by his Zulu parents as a sign of their nationality. This mark alone under the circumstances was enough to ensure his death; therefore, although I allowed Styрман to go without a murmur, I refused Mashabie's request that Paul should accompany him. Mashabie asserted that I would get him into disrepute with his king by this act, and that he deserved better treatment at my hands after he had saved our lives. I would not let Paul go, and told him to tell the king to come and fetch him himself if he wanted him. In the course of an hour Mashabie returned in a great

state of agitation, and, calling Stremboom to his assistance, implored me to send over Paul, otherwise I should greatly anger the king, who was already indignant at the attitude I had taken up, and this might have consequences none of us could foresee. Stremboom advised me also to act as Mashabie desired, and said that he knew the temper of the king would induce him to send over a couple of armed men who would simply shoot Paul where he stood without further question if I held out any longer. Here was a nice dilemma, and the reasoning of Stremboom had such a ring of probability in it, that there was only one loophole for Paul. Pretending therefore to yield more to Mashabie's desires than to the orders of the king, and knowing he had great power in the council, I made him promise me faithfully that if Paul went, he would personally see that his life was spared. With this promise I told Paul to go, and cheerfully, even laughingly, he accompanied Mashabie to the canoe, and crossed the stream dividing Stremboom's huts from the town.

Hammar and I spent a very anxious two hours watching for the return of our men, and at last descried Styrman supporting Paul, alive, and advancing towards the drift. The women had so maltreated poor Paul on the way back from the Kodthla that he arrived more dead than alive, bleeding from numberless little wounds they had inflicted on him with their blunt knives, and some sharp-pointed sticks, and everything else convenient they could get hold of to attack him with.

It transpired that Paul was actually condemned to death for having slit ears before he arrived there, but Mashabie had exerted himself to such good purpose that he got Paul off, and told him to go home. Styrman, as we anticipated, had already satisfied the Kodthla of his nationality, and luckily was free when Paul arrived; for when Paul was acquitted the news spread like wildfire in the village, and many women, who, by the way, are remarkably privileged in their actions on the Matabele question, ran out and had a dig at poor Paul, whom Styrman protected to the utmost of his ability, thereby drawing several ugly wounds from knives and many maledictions upon himself for

the act, till Mashabie, hearing the noise, rushed up and authoritatively dispersed the women.

As we handed the bleeding and exhausted Paul from the canoe at the crossing, he remarked that they might just as well have killed him outright as make such a wreck of him. His wounds, however, turned out to be only skin-deep, and with proper attendance he soon recovered, and was able to get about again, and therewith our Matabele episode ended.

A kind of lethargy came over us under the influence of complete rest and the good food we enjoyed at Stremboom's. It seemed as if we had reached home somewhere, and did not care to go on. The cap-tent waggon he assigned to us as our quarters, round which we had a little fence built to keep intruders off, was the scene of much laziness, and Stremboom, whose trading station was located here, being overjoyed to have our companionship to help pass the otherwise solitary hours away, exhausted all his delicacies in pandering to our appetites, while we were quite unconscious of the inroads we were making on his slender stock of supplies, such as tinned jam, flour, etc., till one day the good little fellow, setting boiled corn on the table, announced that 'white man's scoff' was 'off, sirs,' and we must now content ourselves with native fare. We scolded him roundly for his lavishness in using up the flour, a food he required much more than we, to sustain his frame, already severely reduced by fever, with his stomach not in a fit state to digest the coarser food, while we, who never had a day's illness the whole trip, thanks to our quinine, were fit to digest everything in the way of food the country contained. However Stremboom said that it was all right, for his wagons were coming in by-and-by, and then he would have plenty.

We were much amused at the king's behaviour when he came to visit us, a matter of almost daily occurrence. Stremboom had informed him that we were unlike the traders who occasionally visited his country with wagons, to deal for ivory and feathers, and who invariably displayed such sycophantic behaviour that in one sense the king had a contempt for them.

He appreciated our cooking highly, and was delighted to stay to meals, when, as soon as the dish of meat, fried as only hunters can fry, came on the board, he thought it kingly etiquette to immediately dig the fork we supplied him with into the choicest piece; and as it is a bad compliment to the host, according to native custom, not to clean the platter outright, he often had a manful struggle to justify his title to the distinction of first gentleman in the land. He conversed freely on all topics concerning African affairs, and, spite of his youth, displayed a shrewdness that showed he had lost no opportunity of obtaining the best information. Kimberley had great attractions for him, and he told us that it was from Kimberley that he had obtained all his No. 2 breechloading muskets, over two thousand in number. He had sent through the intervening hundreds of miles repeatedly, engaging the best traders he could get to purchase these guns for him. Armed as he now was, and possessing plenty of ammunition, he looked forward with perfect calmness, even eagerness, to the next Matabele invasion; when properly warned beforehand, his tribe would make things lively for the Matabele when they arrived. They had received timely notice of the previous invasion, but could not credit the idea that the Matabele would really proceed so far from their own country on a marauding expedition in search of cattle, and while dallying with the news the Matabele came upon them in great numbers, and he and his men fought at the lake to keep them back, while the women, children and cattle were being taken to a places of safety. But the Matabele were so numerous, that while they were fighting with them in one place, many others slipped past by another route, and overtook the fugitives till met by the valiant Da Tapo, with the result the reader already knows.

Moremi was anxious to know about cattle diseases, and how far they were contagious. The lung sickness he had heard so much about had not yet visited the enormous herds of cattle at the lake, and he was anxious to know how to keep it out.

Hunting was his great relaxation, and he possessed an express rifle amongst his many weapons that did marvellous

execution, usually killing an elephant with two bullets if he got a fair chance at him. Couldn't we send him some more expresses? He was willing to pay liberally for them. One thing troubled him sorely: he had only the understanding of a black man, and he wished so much to be wise. His chiefs always told him that he was but a boy, and when he wanted to do anything on his own account they always checked him, and gave many reasons that he had to listen to because his people wished it, while all the time his desire was to do otherwise. Why was this? Was it want of education? Could we not show him how to be wise? Stremboom had told him we were different from the white men he had hitherto seen, and his ears were wide open to listen, and our words would give him wisdom.

Once a white missionary had visited him, and had told him and all the chiefs to come to the river, where he made them undress, and go up to their middles in the water, and had then sprinkled water all over them, and told them a lot of things, how to behave, etc.; amongst others, that they were not to have more than one wife. They had all gone into the water hoping to be made wise by the missionary, but he left again in a few days, leaving old Umkook behind, who taught his people to sing songs, and not to work on one day in the week. But Umkook was no wiser than he was, and the missionary was gone. All that this affair had done for him was to assist him to get rid of a lot of wives he did not like, but afterwards he felt no instinct holding him back from having another lot, so he took them; and as he chose them himself this time, and did not require to have all the women the chiefs had formerly given him, and whom he dared not refuse for fear of offending them, his new wives and he lived much more happily together than the old lot, and perhaps it was the influence of the missionary who had helped him to the change—this with a grin that showed he appreciated and enjoyed the humorous side of the position thoroughly!

The white people were a great race to make such good guns and such wonderful things as clocks and watches. How they

got the life into them beat him altogether, for they were things that did not grow from seed. He also touched with some awe on our instruments for taking observations, but nothing would induce him to favour these with a nearer inspection. Instruments that talked with the skies and the sun he believed in because he heard on good authority we used them, but they were not fit for men like him to handle or to look at; that was his opinion, and he did not care to see them.

In spite of the veneer of Christianity thinly laid on, it was apparent that he was as true a believer in the faith of his forefathers as the rawest native in the country, and just as superstitious. How could it possibly be otherwise? A nation's faith is not changed in one generation, nor in many, in a country where the rites of forefathers are instilled, if even in secret, into the children's minds by their mothers, nurses, or companions. Tradition is a most powerful factor in transmitting a faith like this. The narration of any great deed or event concerning the past history of the tribe, including, of course, the opinions of oracles consulted at the time, with results that influenced the welfare of the whole nation, must carry a weight that it will take more than one generation of missionaries to overthrow.

Their religion in itself is really pure and beautiful. The worship of the spirits of the dead fathers of the nation, whom the younger generation, gathering inspiration from history, naturally look upon as the heroes and men who have hitherto controlled the national welfare, with a higher Supreme Being who sways the destinies of the world, is a comprehensible belief capable of getting a firm grasp on the minds of those who find it easy to understand the tangible idea left by the memory of their fathers as a legacy of belief. The crude analogy to our own religion I must leave to those more learned in theological matters than myself to analyse and contemplate.

Moremi also inspected my telescope with many expressions of delight, and immediately wished to know if it could not be fixed to a gun in such a manner as to shoot the enemy at a

shorter range, while their guns would still be at the disadvantage of shooting at the ordinary distance. He was greatly disappointed when told this was impossible, for he fancied he had discovered a new method of making the Matabeles 'sit up' a bit. In such converse, almost daily, we passed many hours with the inquisitive king.

The reader may be sure that I seized a favourable opportunity of explaining to the king the fallacy of paying tribute to Indala for the privileges afforded by the river. He approached the subject with some alarm, and consulted with his chiefs, who often interviewed me on the subject. I spared no effort to influence them against their foolish principle, bringing all the arguments I could think of to bear out the truth. Although they formed no decided opinion at the time, years later, when I met Stremboom again, he informed me with much glee that when Indala again sent to demand the annual tribute, as they were late in bringing it, the king told him that he and the chiefs all wished to see what Indala could do with the river first, and that Indala had better satisfy their minds on this point before they would pay any more tribute, either in corn or girls. It happened that during this particular year the river behaved phenomenally well, a fact which satisfied the king and the chiefs beyond question that Indala was a humbug, although they had been very anxious at times during the season, casting the blame on each other for taking my advice, until the experiment proved a success; and then they favoured Indala with a message that must have taken a good deal of the conceit out of him.

I cannot help thinking, with a grim sense of joy, of Indala's discomfiture on this occasion, and would have given a good proportion of my none too plentiful dollars at the time to have had a bird's-eye view of that scoundrel exercising his sorceries over the river, backed by his irrepressible quartette of rascals, who must have sustained a rude shock to their belief in the mortified king's power, and been much astonished when the witchcraft failed, and the river flowed on and on in undisturbed majesty and

glory as before in spite of the hocus-pocus tricks they played, while spies from both countries secretly hurried backward and forward with news of what was going on at the separate courts. I would also have given a trifle to observe the delight of Moremi's people when quite assured of being well rid of Indala's influence in this matter, and to have heard them in self-accusation admitting the past folly of many years, in true native style summing up and regretting every particle of tribute they had sacrificed while imbecile enough to believe in the power of this miserable juggler.

I think we are entitled to some self-congratulation for our part of the responsibility in having Mr. Indala referred to his bearings regarding this particular episode, and may with satisfaction erase our discontent for his evil treatment of us.

Some days after our arrival, while I was repacking some odds and ends, the king's interest was excited by seeing a pair of *pince-nez* of smoked glass, brought by us in the event of sore eyes attacking any member of the expedition. When shown the use of them, he tried to adjust them to the bridge of his flat nose, and was much mortified to find that they would not stick on, as the grip afforded by his greasy nasal organ was too insignificant to induce the glasses to remain. He said, 'I have told you lots of times that we are only black men, and not wise. Is this not another proof of it?'

Stremboom, who reached this country in his youth, had been resident at the lake for many years. He had known the king from boyhood, and was on very intimate terms with him, hearing all his complaints and griefs with patience, and advising him to the best of his ability. He told us a very amusing episode that took place between himself and Moremi at the time the latter had attained his majority and was proclaimed king of the Batowaana. Stremboom was at work mending a gun belonging to Moremi, while the latter was looking on. The king annoyed him very much by interfering with the work, refusing to let Stremboom finish the job in his own way, and saying, that now he was king, he could do as he liked, and would not be ordered to sit still like

a boy any more. Stremboom, who is a hot-tempered little man, at last angrily pushed the interfering king aside, whereupon he retaliated by boxing Stremboom's ears, who returned the compliment with such goodwill that the surprised King, finding himself getting the worst of it, had to bolt down to the river, followed by Stremboom brandishing the barrel of the gun at the heels of the king, who only escaped a good drubbing by getting into the canoe and putting deep water between himself and his cocky little antagonist. Moremi rode home in high dudgeon, and, calling his council together, wished to proclaim war against Stremboom. The wise old chiefs, however, laughed at this incident, which tickled their fancy hugely, till the tears ran down their cheeks, and made Moremi send Stremboom, whom they all liked exceedingly, some fat oxen as atonement for having assaulted him in his own home, giving the king to understand that they would not espouse his cause in any foolish private quarrels. After Moremi had done justice to his injured vanity by sulking for a few days, his better nature asserted itself, and he sent over some excellent beer by one of his principal wives as a special peace-offering to Stremboom, who, meanwhile, had been in some doubt as to the probable upshot of his hasty action. In return, Stremboom gave the king his double express rifle, a weapon the king had been longing to possess ever since he had seen it first, and thus a firmer feeling of good fellowship than ever existed before was established between them. The king, with great good-humour, related the incident himself, adding that he never ran so hard in his life as when Stremboom was after him with the gun-barrel, and that 'Jan' (Stremboom's Kaffir name) was worse than a lion to get away from when he was angry.

The Batowaana or Baros, as they also are called, are a branch tribe of the Mongwato, who, about ninety years ago, seceded from the main tribe, under the leadership of Matibe, the younger brother of King Khama I. of the Mongwato people, both sons of Tauwana—the Little Lion. Matibe led his men through the Kalahari desert to the lake, and formed a settle-

ment at the Queebe, a hill situated at the north-east end of the range of hills lying about fifteen miles south-east of Lake Nghape (Ngami). Having built a stockaded fortress at Queebe for the protection of his cattle, women, and children, Matibe advanced on the lake, where lived a tribe of watermen called the Makubas, whom he subjugated with little trouble, as they were but poor fighting men.

Matibe had left instructions that in case of necessity a signal fire set alight at Queebe should warn him of danger to those he left behind. He had been away only two days when this signal recalled him, and he hurried back, only just in time to repel the attack of a Mongwato regiment that Khama I. had sent in his wake to recapture the women, cattle, and children that accompanied him. He succeeded in driving the enemy clean out of the country. The result of his success brought several other families of the Mongwato to his standard, amongst others, some of the Bakwenas and Bakubeng. They then held the country under the collective title of Batowaana or Baros, with the right of kingly descent vested in the successors of Matibe, who was head of the Baputi family.

Moremi I. took the reins of government at his father Matibe's death, and was ruler of the country at the time Sibotwana's invasion from Basutoland took place (see Appendix). Shortly after the Basutos passed, Moremi I. died, and his son, Letchulatebe, then a minor, who escaped from captivity, was placed in the hands of a regent, called Machalakwa, a younger son of Matibe's, who collected the scattered tribes, and ruled the country till Letchulatebe, becoming of age at about seventeen years, assumed the throne, with his majority.

Machalakwa was a man of fine instincts, who discharged his trust with the greatest care. He promoted Christianity amongst the people, and by a strict rule, animated by much charity and kindness, inclined the feelings of the nation towards a strong sense of the just and noble in the nature of mankind, while still a determined warrior.

The country was, in those days, overrun with elephants, ostriches, and other large game, which the natives killed in great numbers, selling the ivory and feathers to traders in the Transvaal for guns, powder, horses, and, amongst other things, clothes, for which they showed a decided predilection, and by their friendly overtures induced a few traders to come direct to the lakes to facilitate business. In time the tribe became possessed of many firearms, wagons, and a few horses, which latter they value very highly for hunting purposes.

During Letchulatebe's reign, Sekeletu, the son of Sibotwana, invaded the lake district, raiding many cattle from the tribe then still too weak to offer effective opposition to their wanton invaders, and only able to save themselves and what was left of the herds by taking refuge in the reedy shelter of the Cubango swamps. With the exception of this raid they lived in peace for many years, tending the troops of cattle that soon again increased to enormous herds in the congenial climate, undisturbed by the epidemic diseases which ravage the rest of South Africa at certain seasons of the year, carried from one country to another by contagion through traffic.

During Letchulatebe's reign, when he was near thirty years of age, the remnants of the Makololo tribe, who fled from the Barotzi valley across the Chobe, came to the lake seeking protection from their victors, the combined Barotzi, Batoka, Matotela, and others, begging to be incorporated amongst the lake tribes, under the plea that they spoke the same language as the lake people. Letchulatebe sent them food, but mindful of past favours, organised a little plan that should free him for ever from the fear of another disturbance from that quarter. He ordered them to mass near his kraal, telling them that next day he would decide the question at a great council which they would be called upon in due course to attend to plead their cause. He then ordered his warriors to arm themselves with short stabbing assegais and battle-axes, which they were to conceal beneath the blankets they should wear at the meeting; and working his people to the pitch of frenzy by a violent speech

which he made them, referring significantly to the past indignities heaped upon them, first by Sibotwana and then by his son Sekeletu, he ordered them at the conference on the following day to mingle freely with the newcomers, so that, at a given signal, each one should be in a favourable position to kill one of the Makololo men, who would appear unarmed, at once. Then, when he used the words in conference, 'two bulls cannot live in one kraal,' they were to fall on the Makololo and kill the lot.

When the preparations for the 'reception' were complete, he sent out messengers who brought the men of the Makololo to the conference held within the walls of the Kodthla. According to custom, the Makololo came in without weapons, as it is not allowed to appear before the king armed, and presented their petition to the councillors and king, who, waiting till he saw his people well intermingled with the Makololo, discussing unconcernedly the while, suddenly jumped up and shouted, 'What do you traitors want in my country? have you come to sow dissension amongst my people as you have already done in the Barotzi valley? Know ye not "that two bulls cannot live in one kraal"?' At the word, in an instant, the betrayed and defenceless Makololo were all butchered, not even one remaining to carry the tale out to Basutoland. Their arms, women, and children were distributed amongst the natives, who felt more at ease now that the dreaded Makololo power was effectually broken. Some of the male children, when grown to manhood, dissatisfied with their lot, for they were by law prohibited from intermarrying with the Batowaana people, deserted, and fled up the Cubango, but were followed and killed, all but two, who escaped, and eventually made their way to Matabeleland, where Lobengula offered them protection for reasons of his own.

Letchulatebe died in August 1874, when Moremi II., his boy son, was taken charge of by Meno, a chief who opposed Christianity only because the religion excluded polygamy, and he would not abandon his wives. Da Tapo, the son of Meno, opposes Christianity to this day for the same reason.

Meno ruled the people with much consideration and justice,

until, with the age of seventeen years, Moremi II. attained his majority, and became king.

Some years after Moremi's accession to the reins of government, Lobengula, whose bloodthirsty cupidity was inflamed by the reports the two deserting Makololo brought him of the enormous herds of cattle to be found at the lake, sent in an army under their guidance, of about twelve thousand men, to rob these peaceful dwellers in the desert of their herds. They reached the lake on the 8th of May 1883, when Makehto, of whom more later, brought the report of their advance. The rest of the history has been already related. The returning Matabele managed to take three of the enormous horned cattle from the lake with them to Bulawayo, as specimens to show the king what kind of cattle flourished in that country. Lobengula, incensed at their failure, killed the leaders of the army, keeping the heads of the oxen as a trophy of this disastrous expedition, which he is wont to display as a deterrent to others of his warriors who importune him for permission to attack the lake people again.

By much inquisitive asking, we elicited the fact, of which apparently the families do not care to converse with strangers, that Moremi's family hold the duiker-buck 'puti,' sacred, and on no account will allow one to be killed, nor will any of the family touch one. This is why the appellation Baputi, as a family distinction, is applied strictly to the Mongwato portion of the tribe. Another family of the tribe, the Bakubeng have the same reverence for the hippopotamus and bear its name, while other families have other animals as guardian angels.

Lately I have heard that Moremi II. is dead, and that the country is now ruled by a king called Moremi III.

CHAPTER XXIV

Medical practice at the Lake—Mashabie's wife—Pay off our boys—Words to me—Their farewell to us—Hammar nearly overrun by lions—Adventure with lions at dawn—The kill—Intuhe's song—Stremboom and I go hunting—Disturb a lion in the dark—Hammar hunts the lion.

THE people of the lake, hearing that I was a medical man, came to me for treatment. There were many patients among them suffering from intermittent fever, mostly of a mild type, although many had very enlarged spleens. The treatment they were put under proved successful, and gained me a great reputation amongst the people as a 'medicine man'; and now they came in crowds for medicine, always offering payment in kind for services rendered. Some brought an ox, others goats, sheep, fowls, and corn, so that my practice brought me in more than enough to feed the camp on. My professional colleagues of the country were very jealous of my reputation, and, by consulting the oracular 'bones,' by throwing in the usual manner, declared that I was a wizard of the worst type. They denounced me in no measured terms, and to prove that my science was an imposture, brought some cases that they considered incurable themselves, one a split lower lip, caused by the horn of a buffalo, and another case of an incapsuled splinter of wood in a hunter's leg, which all their incantations and mummary had been unable to remove. Moremi and some chiefs accompanied the deputation to observe my discomfiture, but, as these were very simple cases, I begged that they would give me a week's time to cure them in, stipulating for proper accommodation for the patients, and that regular diet should be supplied. It is almost needless to say the operations proved a success, much to the admiration of these unsophisticated people, and, I am glad to relate, gained

even the approval of the 'medicine men,' who now were only too glad to enroll themselves under my banner.

Several forms of venereal disease also came under my observation, naturally much aggravated by neglect, a souvenir of the many visits paid to Kimberley by members of the tribe who had found their way there to work in the diamond mines, and promptly passed it on to the tribe on their return.

Mashabie also submitted himself to my treatment, suffering from a cruelly enlarged spleen in consequence of malarial fever, and from him I learned that the tribe was not yet acclimatised through their long residence at the lake. The first arrivals had suffered severely from fever, but the next two generations appeared to be attacked by a milder form of the disease, while the children and young men of the present generation were quite free from malarial influence. The aborigines, Makubas and others, were quite strangers to the infection, although they inhabited the spots most liable to produce fever, living principally on islands in the enormous swamps of the Cubango.

All these superannuated cases of intermittent fever showed a marked improvement under the treatment by Fowler's tincture of arsenic, and before leaving I gave Mashabie all I could spare of this medicine to treat himself and other sufferers with.

Mashabie was the proud possessor of a wife, one of the most magnificent women of the tribe, with a queenly behaviour that would have graced her in any society. She showed a marked preference for our company, and showered gifts of food and milk on us so liberally that Mashabie, for reasons of his own, thought it advisable to send her to some distant possession belonging to him, to look after the cattle, as he told us when we jokingly chaffed him for his unnecessary forethought. She came to bid us farewell with many tears, complaining bitterly of Mashabie's despotic authority in sending her off, and took away several mementoes from Hammar and myself in the shape of blankets, coloured cloths and beads

supplied from Stremboom's store, which seemed to cheer her up wonderfully.

The wife of a Boer hunter named Jacobs, who had remained behind with her husband when the great Boer trek passed the lake on its way to the north of Damaraland, was living with her two children under the protection of the tribe at the lake while her husband was temporarily absent hunting towards the Chobe river. She also was suffering from fever and came under treatment. She informed us that they had lost their little all in crossing the 'thirst land,' and gave a harrowing description of the difficulties they had met with in the desert.

It was now time that we bethought ourselves of our boys, who were no longer any use to us, and consumed the beef we liberally supplied them with at such an alarming rate that even my 'extensive practice' hardly sufficed to provide for their wants. Of course, when an ox was killed, the whole neighbourhood came in for a share, to which, by the way, the good people were heartily welcome, for a more admirable set of natives we had not met with anywhere on our travels. By permission of the king the boys were given a free pass and guides to their own country direct to Mameele's drift, the nearest point on the Chobe, from whence they could easily find their way *via* Panda Matenga to their home at Swangie's. The payment in guns that we had promised them was the only difficulty to be got over. Stremboom informed us that there were many muzzle percussion guns of the old musket stamp amongst the natives who, now that they were provided with breechloaders, would probably be glad to get rid of their duplicate inferior weapons. This seemed a happy solution to the difficulty, as otherwise we should have been obliged to drag these faithful fellows all the way to Shoshong with us, that being the only place where we could otherwise hope to supply them with the promised guns.

Information was consequently given to the Baros—the other name of the Batowaana—to the effect that we would

purchase guns for cash ; and, before long, Stremboom's prediction proved correct, for within a week we purchased the sixteen guns necessary to pay our boys with. A collector of ancient arms would probably have rejoiced at the heterogeneous medley of weapons fished out from their obscurity for our benefit, but we sorted out those that were suitable for our purpose, for it was not our intention in any way to take advantage of the boys who had served us so faithfully and long. Our only dissatisfaction was that we were unable to supply them with brand-new guns in recognition of their staunchness to us in the past. However, as they expressed themselves content to receive these second-hand weapons in preference to accompanying us further, we made up the difference by liberally supplying them with extra blankets, five-pound bags of powder and boxes of caps, brass wire, beads, cloths, etc., which Stremboom fortunately had in stock, to the tune of seventy pounds, to show our extreme appreciation of their faithfulness, a proceeding that brought shouts of delight from them that did us good to hear. Only Chiki seemed to have something weighing on his mind which appeared to trouble him very much ; and at last it transpired that he had set covetous eyes on my knapsack, made of such beautiful leather, and he felt as we were such friends, he might take the liberty of asking for it, without offending me. It would look so well on his shoulders when he reached home, and he would look after it so well, etc., etc. The reader may be sure that this request was complied with very readily, to Chiki's intense satisfaction, who caressed the bag and handled it as a great treasure. Of course, this present meant an extra present all round to the boys. And now all the debts were paid, and a final visit made to the king and his chiefs to thank them for the kindness they had shown the boys, on which occasion Moremi surpassed himself by the production of huge pots of beer, of which we all drank to uncomfortable repletion, sitting in a circle according to native custom and passing round the smaller pots holding about three gallons, which were immediately filled again as soon as emptied by

attentive female slaves from the large pots standing near, and then we rolled, rather than walked, back to camp.

Moremi's intention was that those boys should give a good account of his reception of them to their chiefs at home, and of this he was assured by the expressions of gratitude they made before leaving.

That night we killed a great fat ox to give our boys a parting feast, and to provide them with food for the journey, bidding them be careful and not distribute any of the meat, as they would want it all on the road. They, however, laughed to scorn the idea of hunger—look at their guns, and powder, and caps. They would surround troops of game on the road, and slaughter meat to their heart's content. Had they not heard that on the way they were going the game was quite as plentiful as on the Chobe?

At daybreak they woke us to bid farewell. We came out of our shelter, and found them standing in a row with all their things packed in bundles ready for starting. They filed past us as we stood together, and shook hands in succession, then picked up their things as if to be off, but, setting them down again, begged the privilege of shaking hands once more. Chiki held my hand long in his, and a tear rolled down his cheek as he said: 'Kolwani, I am only a black man, but my heart has grown white towards you. When you come to Panda Matenga again, shout out my name, "Chiki," and the trees and the birds will tell me you are there, and I, Chiki, will come to you, without stopping to eat on the road until I have seen your face.' 'And I also, and I also,' came from all the boys in chorus. Then some seized hold of both Hammar's hands, and others of mine, and they danced around us, singing the farewell song of their nation; then, as it came to an end, they seized their packs and hurried off at a run, never turning round, as if not trusting themselves to take a last look at us.

Attracted by the large herds of cattle, lions were numerous in the neighbourhood of the lake. Hardly a day passed but

some tales of their inroads were related to us, while at night we frequently heard them roaring round the stockaded kraal encircling Stremboom's private cattle close by our quarters.

Hammar, who had hobbled down to the outlet of the lake one day with a shot-gun, intent upon providing a variation in our meat diet by shooting some duck, was much surprised to observe a troop of cattle rushing towards him in evident terror with their tails in the air, followed by what he took to be two large calves. The feeling of annoyance caused by the interruption to his sport was soon changed to one of wonder when he suddenly realised that the calves were two well-grown lions in full chase of the herd of cattle. He hastily stepped behind a convenient mimosa tree, and the cavalcade swept past him on both sides; while the lions, who had come within five yards before realising his proximity, suddenly jammed their forefeet in the ground to stop their headlong pace, ploughing up the sod with their mighty claws to within a few feet of Hammar's tree. Standing prepared with his shot-gun for defensive measures, he thought it wise not to fire with shot unless pressed, and quietly watched until the lions turned tail and fled at a pace rivalling the pace they came up at, till they disappeared in the bushes. We went to look at the spot, not half-a-mile from camp, and found the footmarks just as Hammar had described the occurrence.

Next afternoon at three o'clock a cattle herd came running in with the information that some lions had torn down an ox in the bush close by. We immediately proceeded to the spot, but the wary beasts had scented our approach as the wind was in the wrong quarter, and made off before we could get a shot at them. I set a gun-trap at the carcass for them, which through some mismanagement on my part failed to go off, although in the morning we found only the bones and a few scraps of the ox remaining, while the ground was trodden flat by many footmarks of different-sized lions, showing plainly that a large family must have taken part in the feast over-night at the carcass.

About three miles from camp that same afternoon the lions killed another ox on the open short grass bordering the river, flanked by a scrub-grown bank, twelve feet high, about twelve yards from the water's edge. This was coming it rather strong. With better care, I again set the four-ounce gun loaded with a furious charge of loopers—swan-shot, backed by twelve drams of the best powder. Round the carcass I built a strong hedge of thorny mimosa branches, leaving a narrow opening, covered by the muzzle of the gun, across which a string was tightly drawn, and fixed to a lever acting upon the trigger of the gun in such a manner that any agitation of the string would set the gun off. In the evening, at nine o'clock, while we were 'talking lions,' the boom of the gun announced that something had happened. All of us were agog preparing our guns to steal a march on to the spot at daybreak, in hopes of finding some lions still feeding on the carcass in the early dawn, and to get the skin of the lion, probably killed or wounded by the shot. Before daylight I was up to awake the others, who all refused to go as it was still dark. Stremboom actually foiled me of getting his double 8-bore, the most serviceable weapon for close quarters, by refusing to even open his door when I knocked, fearing I would turn him out of his comfortable bed to go on a wild-goose chase in the dark. Thus I was obliged to fall back on my Swinburne-Henry. Stremboom, however, gave me permission to use some horses, standing in a kraal close by, which he had charge of for the king. Awakening the coloured man, Marteens, one of the right sort, who lived at Stremboom's factory, we took two horses, and rode off towards the spot where the trap was set. Going along in the dark, I mistook the particular river bend where the gun was set, and dismounted much closer than I intended to, thinking all the while to be some three hundred yards off while I was within less than a hundred yards from where the lions actually were. Telling Marteens to look after the horses and on no account to mind me, I stole cautiously along the edge of the scrub, looking intently ahead in the growing light for any objects moving in

the short grass, when my foot struck something on the ground, which in the darkness had not been quite apparent enough to attract attention. On looking down I discovered in the twilight that it was the gun, and peering round I found that the carcase of the ox, the mark I had been looking for, was gone, and the bushes forming the hedge were scattered broadcast about the grass. Before I actually realised the position, a low muttered growl on my right warned me that there were lions in the scrub not many feet away. Taken by surprise, I must admit that something was wrong with me for a moment. My head swam as the blood surged through my brain. Fortunately I did not move, and immediately collected my scattered thoughts with a great effort. Quietly I hauled another cartridge from my belt to be held in readiness for quick loading, and then edged closer to the bush for the purpose of making a clear spring from a lion impossible through the thicket. Meanwhile it was growing a little lighter, and I could just distinguish the outlines of branches and trees in the immediate neighbourhood. It was an extremely ticklish position, and I thank my stars for remaining cool; for it was certain that the least retrograde movement would bring the lions on to me. The muttered growling, in coarse intermittent rumbling notes, continued for what seemed to me several minutes, when with a crash a large greyish-looking object bounded out to my right front, on to the bank above. Instead of shooting, I held my fire, warned by an extra heavy growl that there was still another lion lying in the scrub a few feet away from me. Another crash and this one too sprang on to the bank to the left of where the first landed, and as he touched the bank I sent a bullet obliquely through his body from the left flank out in front of the right shoulder. With a roar that sent Marteens off at a gallop with the horses, the beast plunged into the bush. I loaded so instinctively that I had to examine the gun again to convince myself that it was really charged, and waited on the spot for many minutes for the coming day-light to enable me to see more clearly. There was yet a lion not accounted for

in my reckoning; the one the trap-gun must have wounded, who probably was lying in no amiable mood in the immediate neighbourhood. Had he been killed by the shot from the trap-gun, the carcase would have lain untouched by its mates on the spot, for I am not aware that lions eat each other. With the increasing light I investigated the scrub, going forward one foot at a time, and looking about at each move, along the clearly visible track that the lions had made in pulling the ox carcass into the scrub to the foot of the high bank. There was no wounded lion about here, but where they had drawn the carcase to feed under cover of the scrub, the bushes were flattened to the ground in the struggles the lions must have had with each other over the meat. It must have been a grand fight, for lion hair in tufts lay strewn around, and a sapling as thick as my thigh was snapped off at the root by the violence of the struggle. What a sight it must have been to witness this fight amongst these powerful beasts!

Convinced that there was nothing below the bank, I climbed on to the top to investigate the results of my shot. The light was now sufficiently strong to allow me to distinguish the track of the lion a few yards ahead in the sand. About fifty yards further on I found traces of blood on the leaves of small bushes on both sides of the track. This satisfied me that the lion could be got later with the help of trackers and dogs, so I jumped down the bank and started to walk home, believing that Marteens, who carried no gun, had preceded me to camp, borne on the sound waves of that terrible roar. However, he had managed to turn the horses, who had stampeded at the well-known sound, and was coming back to find out what really was the matter, as he had some misgivings regarding my fate. His exclamation '*Baas, leef gij nog?*' '*Baas, live you still?*' betrayed his state of mind when I reached him. However, we galloped off, reaching home just after sunrise. There was considerable excitement in camp when it became known that there were two wounded lions lurking in the neighbourhood to be finished off. While we were making a hurried breakfast, some natives ran off for

dogs and guns, and soon returned with a yelping pack of hounds of all shapes, sizes, and conditions, with curly tails, or even none at all, as the case might be, and off we started to take up the track of the wounded lions. First we tackled my gentleman of the morning, who had gone about two miles, and then lain down to die in a thicket. He, however, still tried to show fight, though very weak. The dogs behaved splendidly, evidently accustomed to this kind of work, especially a wire-haired black bitch, weighing some eighty pounds or more, belonging to the Dutch hunter Jacobs, who, as before mentioned, was absent towards the Chobe. Whilst the other dogs bayed the lion in front she remained in the rear, and when the lion by a spring had cleared his assailants from in front of him for the moment, and attempted to charge, she fixed her sharp teeth in his flank with a vicious snap, and sprang away out of reach of his mighty claws as he pawed round at her. Yelling with all my power to the natives who were rushing up not to shoot for fear of riddling the skin, I managed to restrain them, and getting a shot at the lion's neck laid him low, while the yelping pack jumped at him tearing, biting, and snarling as he rolled over.

There was still the lion supposed to be wounded by the trap-gun and hidden in the bush to be accounted for. The excited dogs were taken back to the scene of the feast, and after searching about, they got a blood-scent, and went yelping off into the bush, and soon we heard by the increased 'music' and low growling of a lion that the beast was at bay. Unfortunately I was somewhat behind in the chase, and several of the keenest hunters got there before me, and opened fire on the lioness, for such it proved to be, before I could stop them. Her shoulder had been badly broken by the trap gunshot, and though stiff she was in a furious rage, bounding at the dogs, who, however, managed to keep out of her way, ably seconded by the wire-haired bitch, who proved a perfect demon in the way she attacked the lion from behind at every opportunity. The fusillade of the hunters laid her low, and also hit one of the dogs

through the intestines; but, strange to say, under treatment this dog recovered from the wound, although shot right through from side to side. The natives cut the lions up after they were skinned, intending to eat the meat, and giving me a good opportunity to examine the anatomy of the beasts, of which a striking feature is the comparatively enormous weight of the limbs. It was not considered out of the way for two natives to carry a quarter between them, instead of one walking off with what from its size appeared an easy load.

With reference to the remark made at the commencement of this hunt, that the least retrograde movement would bring the lions on to me, I wish, by citing a case that occurred to me in Mashonaland, to prove that a lion is often influenced by the action of the hunter in his movements and actions. At Sugarloaf Hill, on the road between Salisbury and Umtali, Mr. Symington, the coach contractor, and myself were walking in the evening by quarter moonlight along the road with a native servant behind us. Suddenly he gave a yell and jumped forward past us. On looking round we saw a lioness in the dim light, close behind, in the act of following us up, evidently hoping that the fright her presence caused would bring about a stampede, when she would be able to pick her supper from our number. I turned on her at once, advancing with the rifle and smooth bore double gun I carried at full cock, ready for action, whereupon she cleared off into a thicket standing in an open space on the left of the road. A cocky spaniel of mine accompanying us, probably not knowing the nature of the beast, and mistaking it for a donkey, as she was accustomed to bay these animals at camp, when I urged her, went into the bush, and the lion came out after her with a rush, as she returned to heel for protection. I was not twenty-five yards from the bush as the lioness came out at the charge, and fully expected her to come right up, but as I made two steps towards her to feel my footing secure, ready to shoot as she came nearer, she thought better of her chances and veered off to the right, when I gave her a charge of buck-shot in the side, fired intentionally, because the shot barrel was

loaded with smokeless powder, so as not to obscure the view of what was going on. She went into another thicket, five hundred yards ahead, while I ran after her, with Symington and the boy following behind. The little dog fetched her out a second time, and she charged up to within ten yards, but turned off, as I never moved, and, with another charge of buckshot in her ribs, gained cover in a larger bush surrounded by long grass, where it was not wise to follow her further. She was a notorious man-eater in the district, and the week previously had eaten one of the post-boys, whom she caught walking behind the coach at night. After our introduction to each other she never was heard of again, and I believe the buckshot settled the account of her existence.

One morning we were pleasantly surprised by a visit from our old friend Intuhe, who had returned from Indala's. He came up with the same quiet dignity that he displayed on our former acquaintance, greeting us with a slight smile, and asking after our welfare. He came to recite us some verses, or rather a song he had composed relating to our meeting at Indala's. Stremboom and Franz, who understood the song, assured us that it was very beautiful, and contained an accurate description of all that had taken place from the moment he had seen us crossing the river in the canoes until the time of bidding us farewell. The concluding words of the song were: 'Walk well, O white men, to the lake, my own beloved home, and show the king and chiefs your innocence.' Judging from the rhyme and rhythm, the verses seemed to be well put together. Stremboom informed us that Intuhe had great talent as a poet, and had composed many songs and verses fitting to all the important events of the nation, which he often was called upon to sing before the council, as a kind of historian, to refresh their memories of past events. We wished to reward Intuhe for his verses, and for the kind manner of his previous behaviour to us, but all he would take, after much pressing, was a couple of blankets, as his had been worn out on the trip.

He was reputed to possess enormous herds of cattle, second

to none in the land, except those of Da Tapo, whose herds figured up at over five thousand head.

With regard to Da Tapo, he would never come near us, although all the other chiefs and we were on the most friendly terms together. From all we could learn Da Tapo was a bitter antagonist of all whites, whom he and others looked upon as unwelcome intruders into his country; therefore he hated them with true and genuine mistrust, a characteristic apparently also well developed in the fighting generals of other South African tribes.

A woman who had been captured by the Matabele during their raid returned home in a most emaciated condition, while we were at the lake. She was taken by a regiment of Majacha (young men) who made her carry heavy loads, and otherwise treated her most shamefully on the way out. When nearing Matabeleland she escaped into the bush, and made her way home through the lion-infested wilds, sleeping at night in trees for safety, and subsisting on wild roots, and a few tortoises she occasionally captured in the desert, until she reached some friendly natives near the Makarikari, who gave her food and sent her on. The history of her miseries would fill a volume, and the crowning blow was that the husband discarded her when she returned. She wailed out her bitter grief to us, deploring the loss of her children, whom the father would not return to her. The king, however, gave her two slaves and a patch of ground to cultivate, with a few goats to keep her in food.

We had arranged with Stremboom to travel to Mongwato with his wagons, which were expected to arrive shortly from thence on their annual visit to the lake, to replenish his stock of trading goods and food, by an arrangement in existence between himself and some of the traders at Shoshong, who supplied him with the means to carry on his business at the lake. The wagons should leave on their return journey after a short stay to rest the oxen. Meanwhile, as the time hung heavy on our hands, I made a proposal to the king to hunt on shares for him if he would supply me with horses, which was accepted, and Umkook the black missionary, scenting a supply

of meat free, offered his wagon, to be allowed to accompany us. Stremboom also joined, providing his wagon and a horse for himself to ride, while Hammar, whose foot was not yet sufficiently healed to allow much exertion, rode along in Umkook's wagon, to pass the time. Right merrily away we trekked along the Zouga river some fifty miles, to a spot famed as the haunt of giraffes, and from whence reports had lately arrived that a wandering troop of elephants had been drinking. The king had given me a powerful young stallion, somewhat wild, which had been foaled at the lake, and which although in no way 'salted' by horse sickness, seemed to be proof against the disease. We had packed our paraphernalia on Umkook's wagon, intending to make this our headquarters during the hunt, as it had a tent extending the whole length of its body, while Stremboom's wagon only possessed a small tent fixed on the back end, which he wished to occupy himself. Trekking along, sitting in conversation with Stremboom, we never noticed that the other wagon, with Hammar, remained behind, and towards evening only, when outspanned after a fifteen mile trek, were we informed by a native Hammar sent after us, that Umkook's wagon had come to grief. Arranging with Stremboom to await my return, I walked back, in the night, nearly six miles, to the other camp, and found that the front wheel of Umkook's waggon had parted company with its spokes, through having dried out during the long, hot season, and consequently he could proceed no further. Hammar and Franz elected to stay with Umkook and hunt about a little in the neighbourhood where they were situated, until our return, while I started off, accompanied by two boys carrying my bedding, etc., to overtake Stremboom, in the early morning moonlight. I soon outstripped the boys, and was walking merrily along the wagon track about 4.30 A.M., when from some round bushes with open ground between, the unmistakable rough growl of a lion disturbed the air about me. For the life of me I could not localise the sound to any particular bush, and, although I could see well enough to walk in the open, the moonlight was too weak to afford

anything like a proper opportunity to peer into the thickets; so I cautiously made my way 'out of that,' watching that nothing followed closely, and, going on, reached Stremboom's wagon just after daybreak. The boys, who arrived about half an hour later, confessed to hearing the same lion growl on passing the spot, and also said that they had seen the track of a large lion following on mine for some distance along the sandy road. While we inspanned and trekked on, they were sent back to Umkook's camp, where they belonged. On passing the spot in daylight on the return journey, where the growl was heard in the morning, they saw a lion lying in a small thicket behind the carcase of a quagga the beast had killed. Giving it a wide berth they hurried on and took the information to Umkook's camp, where Hammar, wishing to pay off old scores, spite of his foot, immediately set out with Franz, Umkook, and several boys, to shoot the lion. When they neared the spot, the boys pointed out the bush where the lion lay, but all they could see was what they decided must be a tuft of yellow grass lying in the thicket, and concluding the boys must have been mistaken in the exact locality of the bush, Hammar walked past and peered into the next bush, when Franz, who had with laudable precaution remained well behind, called out to Hammar to look again at that 'yellow grass,' wisely not mentioning the word lion for fear of startling Hammar, who, being a bit shortsighted, did not at once realise that he was actually standing within seven yards of a fine large yellow-maned lion crouching near him. By the time he had taken in the position, one of the boys, for reasons best known to himself, fired from behind at the lion, close by Hammar's side, and interfered with Hammar's shot. Startled from its position the lion, with an enormous bound and a barking roar, sprang out behind the bush, and disappeared in the distance before any one could get another shot into it. Much disgusted with the whole affair Hammar returned to camp, and spent the balance of his time in slaughtering innumerable duck and small buck until our return.

CHAPTER XXV

Abortive elephant hunt—Giraffe hunt—Thorns—About the aasvogel (vulture)—Stremboom shoots a leopard—How the Namakwas treated Stremboom—How Witboy saved Stremboom at a lion hunt—Piet Jacobs wounded by a native on the Chobe—Moremi's terror of chloroform—Moremi wants me to remain with him—Van Zyl the elder's great elephant hunt, and the end of his career.

THE second day of trekking brought Stremboom and myself to our hunting-ground, where we found that the elephants had again been down to drink as late as the previous day; so, accompanied by Stremboom's veteran right-hand man and majordomo, Jan Witboy, a coloured man, we mounted and took up the track through the open bush, telling the boys to follow on with plenty of water for both ourselves and the horses. There was no mistaking the direction the elephants had taken, for the country looked as if a tornado had passed through the bushes. Here a sapling as thick as my leg had been playfully uprooted in their course; there huge branches lay on the ground, torn down by the passing elephants, whose number we estimated at about fifty, while the grass and brushwood underfoot were levelled down as if by the feet of a large troop of cattle, only there were the large oval deep impressions left by the elephants' feet in the ground, and great piles of excrement that too surely indicated the nature of the beasts we were following. Had it not been for the wish to save our horses for the final hunt when we overtook the elephants, and the certainty of distancing the boys who carried the all-important water, the track was so distinct that we could easily have galloped along it; but prudence advised us to go slowly. We even dismounted and led the horses at times, hoping that we would come upon the elephants resting at some

favourite feeding-spot, or perhaps that we might even encounter them on their return to the water early next day. Elephants approach the water here every other day to drink, and unless disturbed usually prefer to visit the same spot for that purpose. We tracked on till overtaken by darkness, and then camped, congratulating ourselves that the horses drank but little of the water that the boys brought along shortly afterwards: a fact which showed that the horses were very fresh, and with another drink in the morning would do us good service on the following day. At daybreak we were on the track again, going very cautiously, while anxiously discussing the wind which seemed to be blowing from different directions every minute. On every rise we ascended Witboy climbed up a tree to see if there was anything in the valley beyond, but his 'nog niet' (not yet) met us every time he descended, informing us that they were still beyond the next rise. In this manner we proceeded till midday, when we were startled by hearing an enormous fusilade about three miles off, and realised that some hunters had 'flushed' the elephants from ahead, scattering them far and wide. Our only hope lay in the possibility of some of the elephants flying in our direction, for our horses would never stand the strain of a gallop after the already fleeing elephants with the start they had got, and with the certainty of spending another night, and possibly part of next day without water, for our supply was now exhausted. After waiting an hour watching from tree-tops for stray elephants, we gave it up and went on the back track, reaching camp late at night, but with the horses still in such good condition that with a good drink and feed they would be serviceable the next day.

I was much disappointed at our failure to reach the elephants, as this probably would be my last opportunity to shoot one, and the consoling promises I had made to myself to seek compensation later while neglecting them on the Chobe, where they were more plentiful, being afraid to delay the expedition by an over-supply of meat, were now melted into thin air. Stremboom, however, assured me that there was still a pos-

sibility of our meeting elephants on the road out to Mongwato, and with this meagre comfort I had to content myself.

Next morning we took the tracks of seven giraffes that had been drinking overnight three miles further down the river, and, as if to compensate us for yesterday's fiasco, we came up to them at eight o'clock, still in the cool of morning. With a three hundred yards' start they were off with us at their heels, going at an easy canter to induce them to moderate their pace, until a favourable opportunity should offer us a piece of open country, where we could gallop up within easy range before they were aware of our intention and could increase their speed. They led us a nice dance over the sand-belts, and through thorny laagtes that required some art and considerable pluck to negotiate, as it is while hidden under those mimosa trees one hopes unobserved to lessen the distance a little. Stremboom in his excitement charged through one of these thorny thickets about four hundred yards wide, on his skittish little Basuto mare, hoping to take a 'bulge out of our sails' by being a lighter weight, for which he paid the full penalty, as he left nearly all his shirt suspended in fragments on the thorns, and his moleskin trousers were hanging in strips when he emerged on the other side about a hundred yards ahead of us. We also in a measure paid penalty for the venture by sustaining many scratches and tears in the passage. My height and size considerably inconvenienced me in the bushes, for, trying to dodge beneath a small thorny branch that Witboy had safely got under before me, by lying flat on his back along the horse's crupper, I received the full swing of the released branch in the throat and face, and enjoyed a beautiful scrape while passing underneath, a sensation that reminded me particularly of nothing I had ever experienced before. However, ahead we went, following the giraffes, who were swinging unconcernedly along, with their tails twisting and turning in the most lively manner, completely deceived by our tactics into the belief that they had the legs of us. Stremboom's rush was ill-timed, for ahead of us again was another thorny bush, into which the giraffes calmly swung themselves with their long,

pendulous strides, as if the thorns were simply feathers. The unconcerned manner in which they tackled the thorns convinced us, if we ever had any doubt on the subject before, that their tough hides were practically impervious to the attacks of the thorns, which glided over their hides like so much carded wool. Into it again with eyes open and a delicate touch on the rein, for the horses accustomed to this sort of thing were prepared at the least touch to their mouths to swerve about amongst the trees and bushes, trusting blindly to the guidance of their riders. There were some hook thorns in the middle of that bush that almost accounted for the balance of our clothing, and half naked, and, bleeding from scratches, we emerged, Stremboom still leading, into an open grassy plain, across which the giraffes were contentedly swinging along as before. Shouting to Stremboom to give us a chance, we clapped the single spur best worn on such hunts into the horses, and shoved along to within seventy yards of the giraffes before they even knew we were so close. Off we jumped on to the ground; I on the extreme left; Stremboom on the right, with Witboy in the middle, and according to the hunting code, each fired at an animal corresponding to his relative position, so as not to cause complications. I being on the left took the left-hand giraffe. Before the game was well aware of our intention, three giraffes had each received a bullet at the root of the tail, that passing forward raked the body to the front of the chest. Now on to the horses again, Stremboom shouted to us, each to turn his wounded giraffe from the herd and force it towards the river, or as near to the camp as was consistent with the occasion. He nearly came to grief himself over this, for in his anxiety to turn his especial head, the fiery pony he bestrode carried him close past the front of his giraffe, when with a convulsive movement, like the heave of a wave, the beast rose on his hind-legs and sent a crashing, chopping blow at Stremboom and his horse, with its long, powerful forefeet, that, had it 'caught on,' would have made a perfect mash of the whole figure. In this lies the only but serious danger of turning a giraffe's course from the saddle, for the power of such a blow,

delivered like a flash, backed by the enormous weight and muscle of a full-grown giraffe, is something surprising in more ways than one. The correct and most satisfactory manner is to get near the wounded beast's flank opposite to the direction one wishes to turn it in, and by shouting, induce it to deviate in the required direction.

The poor wounded beasts, unable to keep up with their flying companions, who now that they realised the proximity of danger put on a pace that I, at any rate, with my weight on a horse could never hope to emulate, soon were headed into the desired course, diverging more or less from each other, and we drove them homewards. This duty is the most undesirable part of the sport to the hunter, for the flagging energies of the poor hunted beasts and their distress become so apparent that one involuntarily feels inclined to put them out of their misery off-hand. However, this would be injudicious while far from home, for it is advisable to make the beast carry its own meat as conveniently near to camp as possible. There is one point, however, the hunter must pay particular attention to while in the execution of this part of the hunt, namely, not to overdrive the beast. When he discovers that this is likely to be the case, he must kill the animal immediately, for now the flesh reaches a stage when further driving will cause it to decay rapidly after the beast is killed. This is caused by an interstitial apoplexy of the muscles that vastly facilitates the decomposition of meat, which then cannot be used for making biltong, and consequently becomes valueless. Nature has provided a good indication when this undesirable effect is about to take place. The hunter has only to watch the movements of the animal's tail, which as long as he continues fairly fresh, turns and twists about in the most lively manner, but as soon as the condition of the beast arrives near spoiling point the tail droops, and now hangs down like a limp rag. Then no matter how necessary the desire to force the animal nearer to camp, or how far off from water, it is advisable to finish the animal off by a shot in the brain.

Having clearly depicted all the possibilities of this part of the

chase after a poor beast that cannot get away, I have no desire to recapitulate the distressing details of the last struggle we experienced with these gentle creatures, which recall reproachful glances from large, liquid, mild eyes, inclining the hunter not to feel particularly proud of his position, until it is necessary to administer "den Gnadenschuss" with murderous hand. Such was our giraffe hunt. And when we met after it was over, and laughed at our ragged, bleeding appearance, it was necessary to send Witboy off with the horses immediately to camp for water, instructing him to return with the oxen to drag the giraffes nearer to camp, where they could more conveniently be cut up, while we awaited the arrival of help, and watched the carcases to prevent incursions from either lions or vultures.

The giraffe Witboy had shot, more with an eye to the skin than the meat, was an old bull, known, from its peculiarities, amongst hunters, as a 'stink bull.' The oxen, when brought up to be yoked to a sled improvised of branches, which was shoved under this carcase to protect the skin from being frayed in the dragging, got a whiff of the beast, that flavoured strongly of bad musk, and ran off in the greatest terror before being properly hooked on to the impromptu conveyance. It cost us much trouble to get the terrified oxen properly yoked to the sled, and then they dragged the unpleasant load along at a pace that even a whip made from the giraffe's hide later would not force them into on an ordinary journey.

We made a rough stockade-camp, or kraal, round the wagon, to keep out the lions which, attracted by the scent of meat, roared lustily round our camp at night. Aasvogels also appeared in great numbers, and consumed the gigantic offal that fell to their lot from the giraffes, and then favoured us with their company until we left the camp, attracted by the red shimmer of meat hanging in the trees.

Two theories are propounded regarding the marvellous sense of observation that attracts the aasvogel to its food. One set of authorities decidedly contend that he is guided purely by the sense of smell, while others with equal determination insist

that it is only the sense of sight that leads him to his meal. Let me, too, then, throw the weight of my experience on this point into the balance, in the hope of winning converts to the opinion I adopt. The aasvogel is not guided by the sense of smell, for the reasons: (1) When a head of game is shot, the hunter, on looking round, cannot clearly discern a single aasvogel in sight. They are soaring in circles far overheard, in the attenuated atmosphere, appearing occasionally only as specks against the blue sky. No scent from the killed game could possibly reach them through the shifting currents of air intervening between themselves and the earth, yet, no matter what the conditions of the keen atmosphere, in a few minutes one bird appears, soaring in majestic circles downwards, then another and another, until, in the space of seven minutes at most, by my own observation, there is quite a cloud of these ghoulish creatures circling close overhead, with their wings audibly hissing and whistling through the air. Most of these have travelled several miles from all directions, while there may be only a light breeze blowing at the time, a circumstance that effectually precludes the possibility of scent having reached them at this distance; while those coming down wind are, from their situation, placed quite beyond the possibility of being able to 'get a whiff of the game.' The first aasvogel that arrives may reach the spot about one minute after the game is killed, from a distance not less than a full mile off. A 'zephyr' that will carry scent at the rate of one mile a minute bears quite another appellation in South Africa. It is only necessary to imagine the force of an air current of sixty miles an hour, and compare it with the existing circumstance, to at once recognise the absurdity of an aasvogel scenting blood at that rate of speed, even if the scent had the power of penetrating directly upwards, without considering the horizontal direction of winds in general. This in some measure makes it difficult to comprehend the argument advanced in favour of the scent theory.

It is more likely that the bird discovers his prey by eyesight, and is watched in his course by others, who, noticing by the altered

flight of their companion that something of importance to them is transpiring below, inquisitively approach to convince themselves of the quality of the attraction which induced the first aasvogel to descend from his exalted position.

(2) When it is desirable or convenient to leave killed game by itself for a while, should one cover it over with grass and branches in such a manner that it is not visible, the assembled aasvogels will soar about for a time, and then take their departure without even attempting to disturb the covering, a fact clearly demonstrating that their sense of discernment is obscured, which would not be the case if they hunted by scent. Even joints of meat tied up in a tree to protect them from ground carnivora, and well enveloped in grass, will remain untouched by aasvogels for quite a day—longer I have not had occasion to let it hang thus, although they were watching the meat being hung and wrapped up.

Against these arguments, the scent advocates assert that the aasvogel, while knowing the position of the meat, is deterred from attacking it by a fear of traps or treachery. How little this fear influences them can be gathered by observing how they fall over a carcass just skinned, before the hunter has taken himself away many yards. They simply flock over the meat like flies on a pudding, greedily gorging themselves on the flesh, which may be poisoned, or stupidly step into any trap otherwise laid for them.

(3) The aasvogel will follow up wounded game that has been shot in such a manner that not a drop of blood is spilt externally, or will attack cattle dying from disease before they are well dead. I have often driven aasvogels from a poor defenceless dying ox lying exhausted from overwork on the road. Viciously they start in with their sharp beaks, attacking the soft parts under the ox's tail, eating their way into the entrails by putting their heads and long necks right into the ox, which vainly endeavours by feeble efforts to rid himself of his frightful tormentors, who, as one draws his head out for breath, greedily plunge their beaks into the orifice in succession,

fighting for priority, until the beast expires, when they attack the carcass from every point available to them. The astonishing rapidity with which they will devour a carcase has often excited the wonder of those who have not seen it before. In ten minutes I have seen a flock of them clear off the flesh from a carcass of a wildebeest or koodoo so well, that nothing but the skull containing the brain and bones remained as a souvenir of their visit. From smaller game, such as the rooibuck, I have seen them take out the brain with a few powerful strokes of their cruel-looking beaks so cleanly, that it made one thank Providence for not gifting these birds with an instinct to attack healthy living beings.

From all that has been said, it is not difficult to arrive at the conclusion that aasvogels hunt by sight alone, and that scent plays a very subordinate part, if any, in their existences.

While the meat of our giraffes was qualifying as biltong, preparatory to being transported to the lake, we passed the time in skirmishing around the neighbourhood after guinea-fowl and small game, to supply us with a change of diet. Stremboom had two dogs, crossbred from a deerhound and one of the ordinary sharp-nosed native dogs, which seemed to be gifted with a little of all the qualities necessary for hunting, except that they would not stand to game. While we were out only a short distance from camp, a panther, that had evidently been lured into the neighbourhood by the scent of meat, took refuge in a tree from the dogs, who attracted us by their loud barking towards the spot. This was a real panther, and not a specimen of the larger kind of leopard, often misnamed tiger in South Africa. He was lying along the stem of a thick branch, looking wickedly down, and hissing at the dogs as we approached. In the moment he saw us his manner changed. The defiance he had been spitting at the dogs ceased, and, with a stealthy gliding motion, he slipped half round the branch to cover his body, leaving only his claws, arms, and the top of his tail exposed to sight. Good little Stremboom, who, with all his other cheerful qualities, was a jealous shot, hurriedly claimed the first fire, which, of course, he

was more than welcome to; he walked up so close that I shouted to him to look out, as the animal was about to spring, for the tightening grip the animal spasmodically gave to the branch, warned me that such really was the case. However, instead of jumping at Stremboom, he bounded lightly on to the ground, and made off before Stremboom had fired. The dogs were after him in a moment, and pressed him to such advantage that the beast glided up another large tree standing near, with the rapidity of an ordinary cat. He was now at bay and vicious, and I begged Stremboom, as we ran up, not to venture too near a second time. Taking a half circle round the tree, he got a clear shot; and fired, dropping the beast on to the ground with a shot through the lungs. It was the neatest piece of work I have ever seen, to observe those dogs rush on the fallen animal, and, before it had a chance of righting itself, send their teeth crunching through its breast-bone into the chest, for which temerity they suffered some severe scratches from the dying animal. We hauled them off and despatched the animal with a rapid dig in the centre of the chest from my dagger, thrust in where the incision is made for skinning, so as not to injure the skin more than necessary. Jan Witboy, Stremboom's faithful follower for many years, rated his master soundly when he heard of his reckless approach to within springing distance of the panther, at which I chaffed 'Baas Jan,' for standing under the thumb of his servant. Witboy gruffly informed me in an injured tone that he had the right to scold his baas, and if I did not believe it, why, then I might ask him. Scenting some history of past events that bound these two together with no common tie, that night at the camp fire I got Stremboom to relate how Witboy had many a time done him good service through the long years they had spent together in the interior, and in particular how Witboy probably saved his life amongst the half-breeds inhabiting Namakwaland.

Stremboom was returning to the lake with loads of goods from Walfish Bay, where he had gone as an experiment to replenish his stock for trading purposes, and Witboy accom-

panied him. On their return, while in the Namakwa country, a chief, if I remember rightly, called Kok, came with his several followers to the wagons, and, asking Stremboom if he wished to trade, begged an inspection of the goods. Nothing suited the fancy of himself or his people, until most of the goods had been hauled out and spread on the ground, when this chief asked Stremboom if he could write. Stremboom admitted of course that he was master of that accomplishment, when the chief mockingly said, 'Then write down that I have taken your things,' and quietly ordered his men to walk off the lot. Stremboom rushed for his gun, and would inevitably have fired at the thieves, of course with disastrous results to himself, for his party numbered but two fighting people, Witboy and himself, against fifty well-armed men, when Witboy caught hold of his master and took the gun away; then, seizing two sticks, he remarked that he would show these fellows something he had learnt in the colony from the niggers, and waltzed in among them to such good effect, that he drove most of the men away from the goods. They were only half-hearted about robbing a man in cold blood, and would rather have seen Stremboom attack them, when they might, under the plea that he had killed or wounded some one of their tribe, have looted the whole turn-out, of course killing the 'aggressor' as they would then term him, and his people, as a preliminary to their proceedings. There really was no law in the country; but a high-handed act on their part, without an excuse for it, might have brought retribution from some of the civilised powers inhabiting their borders to the west and east, and have given a party of Trek or Boers, for instance, a reason for invading the country.

Of course Witboy got badly handled in this encounter with the Namakwas, and to this day carries a damaged jaw from one of the blows he received, but he saved the position by his well-considered act. Stremboom offered what assistance he could to Witboy in the fight, but was soon held by some Namakwas from doing much injury, being not over powerful,

while the gigantic Witboy walked through the smaller Namakwas, dealing them blows right and left with his sticks from both hands that left his 'ngwati'—writing—on many a broken head.

They packed the goods on to the wagons again, and sent after the cattle, which they found the Namakwas had driven away to some inaccessible spot, thus preventing Stremboom from proceeding on his journey. At night some women of the tribe came to the camp and advised Stremboom to fly, as they said his life was threatened, for they had heard the Namakwas decide to kill him in the night and take his goods. If he was prepared to fly, they would show him where he could obtain one of the Namakwas' horses to ride away on. Witboy, however, who understood the people, concluded it was intended to make it appear that Stremboom had stolen a horse, and consequently, when found out, had fled from the country leaving his goods behind, which the Namakwas seized as compensation. He growled out his ideas to Stremboom, and with his sticks, drove the women away from camp, with the further idea that the Namakwas should not even have the excuse of saying that Stremboom had enticed the women to come and visit him. They waited for three days without molestation, when one morning they espied their cattle grazing close to camp, for the Namakwas, finding they could not intimidate Stremboom or implicate his people, thought it best to let them leave the country quietly.

Stremboom also related how later Witboy had rushed to his rescue at a lion hunt, when during the chase a lion jumped on a native five yards from Stremboom, whose gun refused to go off at this critical moment. While the lion was crunching the native up like a shell, Stremboom stood trying to put his gun to rights, expecting every second that the lion would leave the native and spring on him. Witboy intervened and shot the lion dead in the brain on top of the mangled corpse of the native.

During the relation of these episodes Jan Witboy lay wrapped in a blanket shivering in one of his periodical attacks of fever, interpolating remarks and corrections to Stremboom's narrative, that showed how keenly he appreciated his master's approval for

past services, shown, not only by the words he spoke, but in a more substantial manner by cattle and a wagon that Stremboom had presented to his staunch retainer, who now lived with him more as a friend and a companion, attending to the cattle and gardens adjoining the factory.

In four days our biltong was dry enough to permit our return to the lake, where we gave the king his share of the meat and also a giraffe skin, which he promptly traded to Stremboom for goods.

During our absence the Dutch hunter, Piet Jacobs, returned from hunting on the Chobe. He had heard from some natives on the Chobe, who brought him the sheets of the nautical almanac we had torn out and thrown away, that we had passed there. They informed him that we had been killed near Matambanja by the natives, who probably knew no better, not being able to account for our disappearance across the desert. Jacobs gave us some valuable information regarding the system of the northern position of the Cubango network of water. He had travelled up the Selinda river in canoes, and actually traversed the anastomosis between the Cubango and Chobe 'by water,' which he gave as about three to four feet deep. The natives there had induced him to cross the Chobe to shoot elephants, which still ran in great herds on the land strip between the Chobe and Zambesi rivers. He had not felt safe among these natives, who had persuaded him to go much further than he had intended at the outset, with promises of no end of ivory to be obtained on ahead, for the mere trouble of shooting. When he crossed the Chobe, a native armed with a flint-lock gun undertook to guide him to the elephants; and soon brought him to an enormous old bull-elephant, whose tusks were so huge that they appeared a heavy encumbrance to him; he lived in solitude, probably driven out of the herd by the younger bulls. While crawling up to within shot of this enormous beast, he had insisted that the guide should keep alongside of him, for the man refused to take the lead, and otherwise behaved in such a strange manner that he was afraid to allow him to remain in the rear.

When within range, about thirty yards from the elephant, he insisted that they should both fire together, as he did not wish to be left with an empty gun in his hands even for a moment, while the guide had his loaded; but when he pulled and mortally wounded the elephant, who crashed off into the bushes with a great scream, the guide withheld his fire, and jumping back with a shout, levelled his flint-lock at Jacobs, who, thanks to the intervening moment that it takes the flash in the pan of a flint-lock to ignite the charge, and a slight hesitation on the part of the native, managed to jump out of the line of fire with his body, but received the 8-bore round bullet through the palm of his left hand, while still holding the gun; the shot also carried away the top part of his thumb. The native ran for his life before Jacobs could reload and fire at him. The Dutchman left the elephant to its fate, and immediately made for the canoe, which he fortunately found hidden in the reeds where he had left it. Too maimed to risk ferrying himself over through the intricate channels in the reeds of the Chobe, he waited disconsolately, not knowing what to do, until two old women came hunting for roots along the bank of the river; these he pressed into service at the point of his gun, to row him over to where he had left his own boys in camp on the south side of the river. He got over safely, but was now made aware by some other natives that he had been shooting on forbidden ground, which his guide, in case of inquiry, would have made the excuse for murdering him and taking his gun. They were a wild lot on the Chobe. Much disheartened and severely injured, he with his party returned home by the Selinda river in canoes, the journey taking him twenty-five days. Fearing mortification would attack his wound, he, by the advice of some Makubas living in the reeds, who knew of a healing root, applied a poultice of this plant to his hurt, removing it whenever the pain warned him that it was time to put another poultice on. This had kept his hand clean and well; but he was in sore distress, for he knew that the splintered bones should be taken away, and not knowing how this should be done, or who could perform the opera-

tion at the lake, he nearly went mad at feeling himself in this helpless position. His joy at hearing that there was a white doctor at the lake when he came near home, had caused him to thank his Maker in one long fervent prayer that made his boatmen think he had gone insane.

Jacobs's wife, a Boer woman, whose people I had met formerly in the Transvaal, was naturally much affected at his return in such a miserable condition.

The king, who had hired Jacobs to hunt for him, feeling a responsibility in the matter, came to me very much agitated at Jacobs's mishap, and offered ten head of cattle as a fee if I would operate and save his life. I told the king that a fee was not necessary, for white men always helped each other when in distress, and that he might be sure I would do my best for Jacobs. He wanted to know how many men would be required to hold Jacobs down during the operation; but, still having chloroform in my possession, I assured him that this would not be required, for I would put him to sleep, and he should feel nothing. This statement was clearly beyond Moremi's comprehension; he wished to know to what extent witchcraft was implicated in these proceedings, and when shown the chloroform in explanation, said that this stuff, that looked like pure water, could surely never act as we said it would: we would see!

After Jacobs had recovered from the fatigue of his journey by resting a couple of days, I prepared for the operation, informing the king, who insisted on being present, that the event would take place that morning. He came accompanied by some wild-looking medicine men, probably the 'prophets' of the country, who were adorned with snakes' bladders and skins, and various other charms of a similarly gruesome nature.

From the nature of the wound, I found that it was possible to save three fingers and the best part of the stump of the thumb, a matter of great importance to Jacobs, for this would enable him to hold the barrel of his gun again.

When the chloroform was applied, the king and his men

looked on with bulging eyes, and as soon as the usual tests were applied to prove insensibility, such as lifting the arm, that fell back apparently lifeless, and feeling the eyeballs to note any reactive quiver, the king rushed from the room with a shriek, followed by his staff, who hurriedly betook themselves to a large tree some three hundred yards off, and held a council as to what should be done with me, who had killed their hunter Jacobs, for they were firmly convinced that he was now dead. Knowing nothing of this, I completed the operation and came out to go home, when Stremboom, who, hearing some suspicious words while assisting me, had quietly slipped away to make inquiries without my knowledge, shouted to me to remain where I was. The king wished to know before I left the hut how Jacobs was, and if he was not dead. Not thinking any harm, I continued walking towards the tree, where a crowd, now numbering close on two hundred men, had collected, when the king yelled at me in the greatest excitement, causing a roar amongst his horrified people that made me halt to ponder over the situation. I assured the king through Stremboom that Jacobs was all right, and that the operation was successful. 'Then bring him out; let us see him,' was the reply. There was no help for it. Poor Jacobs had to be fetched out supported on my arm; but, hardly recovered from the influence of chloroform, he staggered a bit. The king shouted, 'Ho! we told you that he was dead; you are only pretending that he walks. This is witchcraft! Why doesn't he walk alone?' The fresh air had meanwhile revived Jacobs, who now, at my request, moved off fairly well into the house. A silence as of great wonder fell on the people, and, feeling at liberty, I now walked towards the crowd, who fled, king and all, from my presence as if the Evil One *in propria personâ* had appeared. Jacobs recovered in the due course of events, and retained a hand that was still quite serviceable for his purpose of hunting.

It took the king two full days to recover from the shock of this experience, but on the morning of the third day he sent me a deputation begging permission to call personally. With no trace

of his usual blustering manner, he came warily into the hut, backed by Mashabie and other chiefs, keeping a good look-out at the open door of Stremboom's hut to see that the retreat was not cut off. We were much surprised at this behaviour, and when I rose to offer the king a seat, as usual, he refused to take it, and squatted down on a mat, saying the floor was quite good enough for him. He came to ask more about the wonderful medicine that, although it looked so much like water, had power to take people's lives for a little while. Would they die if plenty was applied? Yes. He now understood how poor and weak he was. What was all the mummery in the country that never brought rain when it was wanted, or stayed the power of a flood when it came, compared to this wonderful 'muti'—medicine. Had it other powers than the one he had seen it used for? He believed anything of it, and he and his poor ignorant chiefs had sat in judgment on us when we came, and even wanted to kill us, and we had shown no fear. No! because we had the 'muti' about us, and could just go 'pheeü,' and put them all to sleep and cut their throats, or make them into animals, just as we liked. That was why we were so quiet. That mighty medicine that you could give a man, and he would not even feel the cut from a knife that is always so painful! Hau! Tehle! Hay! Yes; they were but poor blacks, etc. etc. He went on for a long time in this strain, and then came to the gist of his intentions, which he called on Mashabie, as an older man who had influence, to explain.

The long and short of it was: Would I not remain with the tribe to help them in their illnesses, and they would make me a great chief? A whole stretch of country should be mine, and they would give me slaves, cattle, and wives to make me happy.

I tried to explain with all my might and reason to the king that there was no occult power in my 'muti,' and that it was what all white men used to alleviate the pain of the wounded. But they had made up their minds to believe what they liked, and took all our arguments for mockery. Of course, I could not accept the king's offer to stay and become a Baros, but while

I was still here would do all that was possible for them. With regard to that disease, the fever that plagued them so continually, they would never get rid of it unless they left the lake and moved higher up the river beyond the swamps; in fact, into Indala's country.

Would I, at least, vaccinate the tribe, as I had done for Khama, to protect them from the small-pox? This I would do in a minor degree, as it would take me too long a time to complete the operation for the whole tribe, for we intended to leave shortly, and he must attend to the further vaccinating after we had left; and with this promise they departed.

Hammar and Stremboom did not let me off so easily from the ludicrous side of the king's proposal, for it was long before they ceased discussing the picture between themselves, disregarding my entity the while, of how well I should look with a harem of all the king's discarded wives, and how the best opportunity would be offered for my offspring to become hunters in the male line, and what influence I should gain in the country by sending my daughters as presents to the prominent chiefs, Indala included, who would increase my power till I became King of the Sand-belts and Mabula-trees of the whole country. Of course, they expected to share in my greatness in the milder degree becoming to their insignificance. These compliments I received with the modesty becoming to unusual greatness.

This remark bearing on King of the Sand-belts led to the relation of Van Zyl the elder's history in the lake district. For many years, long previous to Moremi's accession to the throne of his kingdom, Van Zyl had lived amongst the Baros. He built himself a house near the Queebe hills, and lived in great state, somewhat feared by the tribe for his ferocity and great personal courage in the field and while hunting. He became so powerful that he levied taxes from the natives living in his district, and as the country was ruled by a regent at the time, who feared to take decisive measures against him for this and other aggressive acts, Van Zyl became almost a terror in the land.

Shortly before Moremi's majority, Van Zyl went up the

Cubango river hunting, taking seven horses and as many light-weight Hottentot hunters with him. They came upon a troop of one hundred and twenty elephants, which Van Zyl had gone to seek, and when quite assured of their habits, after watching them for a time, he waited one day, with his horses in splendid fettle, for them to approach the river to drink, thus catching them while thirsty, and therefore not in a condition to endure a hard run. He gave orders to his outriders to take up the chase one by one, each one to relieve the other, and continue the chase as soon as he could get up after the first one's horse was blown by the speed, and thus following on the track, managed cleverly to drive the exhausted elephants, already suffering from thirst, to a standstill in a valley, where there existed a dried-up pan covered with reeds, in which the tired brutes trampled round and round in a ring, having during the chase spent what little water they still held in the reservoir of their trunks by throwing it over their bodies to cool themselves, a habit peculiar to elephants when hard pressed. Not a shot was fired during the chase, as Van Zyl well knew that elephants scatter at the sound of firearms. By simply driving them at a forced speed he effected his intention of completely tiring them out while in the troop. Having succeeded entirely in his wish, he then sat down and deliberately shot the whole lot, who were now too tired to attempt to escape, and, cutting out the ivory, loaded up his wagons, taking the road home by the lake.

Naturally the natives were indignant, as he expected, when they heard the news of this wholesale slaughter of the animals that represented the wealth of their country. They determined to take their full share of the ivory, an intention Van Zyl anticipated by preparing to outmanœuvre them.

Knowing the country well, and ably backed by his Hottentots, Van Zyl, while travelling cautiously homeward, received the information that a regiment of three hundred Baros was waiting to meet him at a certain spot. Giving his men instructions to trek night and day towards Walfish Bay, and not to strike the

regular wagon route until well beyond a possibility of being overtaken by the Baros, he mounted his best horse and, leading another, rode quietly into the ambush that had been prepared for him. With natural 'cuteness the chief in charge kept his intentions to himself, waiting to take action when the expected wagons arrived. He therefore entertained the wily Van Zyl, who casually mentioned that he had ridden ahead of the caravan, as he was tired of the incessant whip-cracking necessary to drive the oxen along through the heavy sand, but that he expected the wagons to be there in a day or two. When two days were past, he expressed no anxiety at the non-appearance of the wagons, simply saying that they were very heavily laden, and must have stuck a bit in the sand, and by his unconcerned behaviour allayed any suspicions the natives might have had. When the natives became restless on the third day, he said that he could not understand where the wagons were, and if they did not arrive by noon the following day he must go and see what was the matter. Next day he dragged affairs out as long as possible, and then, pretending to be annoyed at the delay of his wagons, rode off, with the cheery assurance that in the morning he would be back with his ivory, and that he would give his drivers a something hot to remind them of their indolence, probably brought about by overfeeding on too much elephant meat. Then he rode off, with a clear four days' start, for his wagons, and following on the tracks overtook them at a place far beyond the reach of pursuit, where they were resting to recruit the exhausted cattle. His personal prowess and dreaded nationality—Boer—secured him a free pass through the Namakwa country, and he proceeded to Walfish Bay, where he sold the ivory to great advantage, and then returned to the lake, where he took up his old quarters near the Queebe hills, as if nothing had happened.

The natives looked on at this with queer sensations, not quite understanding the coolness of Van Zyl's move. But as no one took the initiative against him, and nothing was said, the affair blew over.

Once again Van Zyl ventured on a similar hunt with equal success, and pursued the same tactics to get away with the ivory, with a variation that completely threw dust in the eyes of the irritated natives, who again sent a party to take him and his ivory at all risks.

This time Van Zyl sent two of his three wagons off at once to take the route to Walfish Bay, and proceeded quietly with the third, lightly laden with the small and inferior tusks, until he encountered the regiment sent to take him. He asserted that one of his other wagons had damaged a wheel, not far away, and that this was being mended by the drivers of both the other wagons, who understood the job, and would come on shortly as soon as the necessary repairs were completed; and the natives, never supposing that he intended to forfeit the load of ivory with him, again believed his story, and quietly awaited the coming of the other wagons before betraying their intentions. By similar tactics, Van Zyl again got his four days start for the two decamping wagons laden with the pick of the ivory, and then quietly rode off, ostensibly to see what caused the delay, leaving the natives possessors of the inferior tusks, and, playing the old trick, succeeded in reaching Walfish Bay safely with his loads, finally returning to the lake.

Previous to his return, Moremi was made king, and, much incensed at Van Zyl's behaviour, sent for him to come to the Kodthla, to answer for his misconduct before the council. He also informed Van Zyl that he would no longer permit him to levy taxes on the natives, and that if he desired to remain in the country he must come and live at the lake with the people, and not remain out in the sand-belts, where he exercised his own sweet will over the inhabitants.

Van Zyl, not realising that things looked serious, and from long custom feeling secure in his position, refused to even give an answer to the royal messages, and turned a deaf ear to the repeated demands of the king that he should come to defend his character, until Moremi, as he himself told me, rode over with some of his men to visit him. Before he, Moremi, had

returned to the lake, Van Zyl was dead and his house burnt down, with all the belongings and furniture in it. How he met his death, or who was the executioner, never transpired. To our inquiries as to the causes, Moremi said, 'He is dead! that is enough! and don't ask any one again about it, or myself and the chiefs will be angry!'

This Van Zyl was the father of the other unfortunate Van Zyl who was killed by Indala's command. He had only been a short time in the country, and was in no way a participator in his father's misdeeds.

The lake offered no attractions to explore it, as all the information we could gather went to show that it was encircled by an impenetrable belt of reeds which made an approach to the open water in the centre an impossibility.

To the south of the lake, about fifteen miles distant in the Queebe hills, I have since heard that gold is supposed to have been discovered in quartz veins.

CHAPTER XXVI

Medicinal qualities of native roots—Arrival of Stremboom's wagons—Visit by king's wives—Return visit to dinner—Instrument of torture—A Mongwato burns a boy to death—Kingly retribution—Slavery—Stremboom's trade.

AMONGST the herbs used by the medicine men of the country, was a root the plant of which they refused to show me. This had qualities acting on the testes, like that described in Batokaland. For the consideration of a shirt, one of my sable colleagues brought me a man to inspect who had used the root for fourteen days. The organs were painless, but each one increased in size to the dimensions of an ostrich egg. The possessor of this ornament assured me that the vitality of the organs was much more active than usual, but that he suffered no other inconvenience. In reply to inquiry as to what happened afterwards the medico informed me that, by abandoning the use of the root for a few weeks, the organs resumed their natural size and functions, without leaving any deleterious results whatever behind. I examined the objects carefully and convinced myself that it was a genuine case of hypertrophy of the substance of the organ, and no chance hydrocele or other pathological malformation.

The medicine man also assured me that the use of this drug, given to women in need of it, abundantly increased the flow of milk, and also developed the breasts to greater proportions.

I feel convinced that a thoroughly scientific investigation of the qualities of this drug, and several other well-known roots would repay the trouble of research by benefiting mankind largely.

At last Stremboom's long-expected wagons arrived from Mongwato in charge of a man called Steele. There was great

jubilation in the house on this occasion, and considerable opening of bags of flour, tins of jams, and a mysterious case adorned with modern hieroglyphics closely resembling three stars (***), symbolical of the heavenly state the contents would soon produce in the consumer, which the cautious Stremboom, while apparently ignoring in presence of the savages, to whom the knowledge of its contents might be baneful, yet secretly, under cover of the friendly night, with much ceremonious attention, proper to the dignity of the occasion, transported to the seclusion of his bed-chamber, whence sounds of a secret discussion of much importance regarding the flavour and quality of this celestially promulgated elixir soon arose from four deeply interested investigators.

The following day Moremi sent his four wives over to 'call' on me, a gentle hint that such trifles as gaudy shawls, patent leather button shoes, and articles of similar decorative value would be welcome to them as a friendly return for the corn and beer they had liberally supplied us with. Nor were the good ladies disappointed, for when we had exercised our retributive generosity to the full, Stremboom produced a special box of trumpery, sent for the purpose, and displaying the contents before the delighted eyes of the fourfold queens, handed the lot over to them to their intense satisfaction. Adorned with beady necklaces, armlets of bright metals, and shawls of most wonderful awe-inspiring combinations of colour, the ladies then took their departure, leaving us an invitation to pay a social call on the morrow.

Of course we accepted; and arrayed in our best sent a herald in advance to announce our approach. This was an occasion on which the ladies entertained us personally, so all men of the tribe, including his majesty, were precluded from the function. Attended by smart-looking damsels, the queens dished up boiled beef on a large wooden platter holding enough for at least two dozen men, and with their delicate fingers handed us choice pieces of the meat principally notable for fatty preponderance, which we out

of courtesy were obliged to swallow, until even etiquette made the continuance of the feast an impossibility. I must confess that I selfishly kept close to the lady who directed the fate of a delicious boiled ox tongue garnishing one side of the large dish, and manfully held my own until the others succumbed to the hospitable attentions of our hostesses, when I also politely intimated that my capacity had reached its limit. Stremboom, who was well acquainted with the forms of extreme *bon ton*, took an unfair advantage of his knowledge and completely eclipsed us by giving vent to an enormous 'belch,' which seemed to have the distinguished approval of our hostesses, who appeared somewhat discomfited that we also did not shake out a similar mark of our extreme appreciation of their table. Although, let me whisper it gently, not to offend sensitive ears, full to the schoolboy's point of 'can't eat any more,' another more serious demand on our capabilities was in store for us, for the attentive damsels whisked the remains of the meat away, and produced several enormous pots of beer that even my qualification of having once been a German student fairly blenched at in the then condition of my anatomy. Hammar confided to me that in his opinion it was simply culpable to tackle the beer, but Stremboom held bravely up: he was not going to disgrace his Swedish nationality by turning away from fluids of an alcoholic nature, no matter under what outward, and to him perfectly indifferent, semblance they were concealed; and seizing the smaller pot that the damsels handed round, he took a draught that imperilled the continuity of his garments round the waist, if not the more hidden parts of his constructive organisation. After this he handed the pot to Hammar, who, with many misgivings, placed the vessel to his lips and also did fair justice to the concoction. It has always been a marvel to me how these small men manage to accommodate such quantities of material, while I, a very giant compared at least to men of Stremboom's calibre, am constrained to cry 'hold, enough!' It was now my turn, for Hammar handed me the pot still containing a quart or thereabouts, with

a malicious grin, and from me it was expected that the pot should go back empty! Thoughts of flight passed wildly through my brain, only dispelled by the well-recognised knowledge of incapability. There was no help for it, so letting out a couple of reefs in the leathern belt that helped to hold my being together at the waist, I bravely raised the pot to my lips and drank. What was my surprise to find the cool beer slipping down with the pleasantest sensation imaginable, a fact best explained by the native phrase 'beef wants beer.' And so it is: the consumption of beef in quantities, without concomitant vegetable matter, induces a desire for some farinaceous substance. This the natives in their crude manner recognise, and so arrange their feasts, alternating one with the other, but never by any chance devouring the two together, for in natural compensation 'beer also wants beef' again, and so the feast is prolonged. A fact I subsequently learned to appreciate to the full now that my attention was called to it.

Fortunately it was not improper for the ladies to aid our flagging efforts in consuming the beer. It was even native etiquette to invite them to partake of what their own hospitality had provided, and with the last drop, which the willing slave girls were called in to finish, our visit terminated, with many handshakes and expressions of goodwill.

We walked over to the Kodthla to have a look at an appliance that had formerly aroused my curiosity. It consisted of a large flat stone, on which lay a heavy log, four feet thick, flattened on one side to allow it to lie closely on the stone. This simple looking contrivance was nothing less than an instrument of torture to help reluctant witnesses to the recollection of the truth, when they showed any desire to prevaricate or withhold information from the council. The suspected person was placed in a lying position on his abdomen on the stone, with the head alone free, while the log, weighing about fifteen hundred pounds, was gently let down on to him, where it remained until the truth or a conveniently near substitute was expressed out of the individual, with sundry other matter contained within the

recesses of his body. The chiefs assured me that it was a most effective method of making a man say what was required of him, and seldom failed in bringing out the real truth.

There was a regular 'rush' on the newly arrived English Cavendish tobacco at Stremboom's factory by the king, chiefs, and many other people, who, once having learnt the charming vice, insist on having nothing but the best Cavendish and Golden Leaf, which they smoke out of ordinary pipes like Europeans. Of Boer tobacco, usually the choice of white smokers in South Africa, the Baros would not hear, actually spitting on the ground at its mention. Whether this sign of contempt is levelled at the nationality of the tobacco or its quality remains an open question, but Boer tobacco they would not smoke at any price. I may mention that the Baros have no exaggerated affection for the Boers, as they live in fear of being called upon some day to forfeit their beautiful cattle, the native's pride, in taxes, should the Boers ever extend their influence in that direction, now, in 1896, no longer a possible event owing to the general portioning out of Africa with a rush in which the Boers were somewhat left behind.

A native from Mongwato who had settled at the lake, where the inhabitants showed him exceptional courtesy, meaning thereby to express their goodwill to Khama's people in general, mistaking the deference and kindnesses shown him as due to his individual personality, got himself into serious trouble through his arrogance. The king had given him a little boy slave to herd his goats, one of which the unfortunate youngster allowed to stray and get lost. The Mongwato, with brutal ferocity, tied the helpless child to a tree, and, piling a heap of brushwood and sticks round him, set it alight. This happened close to Stremboom's huts. The piercing shrieks of the sufferer attracted the attention of Stremboom and the king, who happened to be near at the time, and they ran together to the spot and released the child, but too late to save his life, for, as they laid him down, his scorched and roasted abdomen burst open, allowing the contents to fall on the ground, the child expiring

immediately afterwards. The king was infuriated at this brutality, and insisted on punishing the perpetrator of this cruel act on the principle of curing the cause by a similar dose of his own prescription. The king and two of his young men tied the man up, and were already going to light the wood they built up round him, while the miserable Mongwato begged that they would only burn him a little, not enough to take his life, as he had only intended to scorch his victim, but that the fire got the better of him and killed the child in spite of his efforts. Stremboom interfered at this juncture, and, kicking the collected faggots away, insisted that the king should not punish the offender by burning, but if it was necessary to kill him, to which he had no objection, then, kill him outright at once by shooting or hanging. The king, who was cooling down a little, told Stremboom to shoot him himself as he had interfered, a diversion Stremboom of course refused to comply with, saying he was not an executioner. 'Well then,' said the king, 'I know another way; we will put his fire out by water.' So they took the man in canoes to the middle of the river Taugche, flowing close by, and catching hold of his legs, held him head first down in the water until he was nearly drowned. Then reviving him, till he could speak, they repeated the experiment several times, till Stremboom, sick at the sight, again interfered, and told the king to kill him outright or leave him alone. 'Wait a bit,' said the king, 'you can now take the man and look after him for a bit, but mind he does not run away, for we have not done with him yet.' Moremi sent for three horses, which were swum over the Taugche, and then he and two others, with long sjamboks in their hands, mounted, and told Stremboom to turn out the man, who by this had somewhat recovered from the rough handling he had experienced in the morning. They put him on the Mongwato road, with two hundred yards 'law,' and then started after him with their whips, slashing and flogging the unfortunate being, till tired out themselves they returned home, quite satisfied that the demands of justice were fulfilled. Moremi's

chiefs, however, were of a different opinion when they heard of the affair, and soundly rated the king for inflicting so much torture on a human being on his own responsibility, saying that he should have killed the man outright at once, and, reminding him that he was still young, advised him next time to bring a culprit before the council.

Personally I am of opinion that this verdict of the chiefs was influenced more by the fact that the man was a subject of Khama, whom they were anxious not to offend, as torture is an extinct quantity under Khama's rule, than by a pure love of humanity, for they themselves, at times, privately maltreat culprits in the most cruel manner.

We met this man later on, passing through Mongwato. He bore many indelible marks from Moremi's sjamboks, and when asked if he was returning to the lake to claim his goats, walked off with a much injured air, muttering maledictions on the lake and all its people. How this fellow in his injured state, stark naked, without even being armed with a knife, managed to find his way and sustain his miserable life across the four hundred miles of desert to Mongwato is a mystery. The king had made sure that either lions or wolves would have settled the question of his existence long before he reached his native hearthstone.

When talking of slaves amongst the natives, the term slave does not bear the same import as to the European mind. A slave is certainly the property of his master, who holds power over his life and working capacity; but from what I have seen, the position between master and slave is more one of relative domesticity than actual slavery. Certainly he must follow his master's fortunes, and carry the bundle of bedding and food on the march, or help till the soil; but he has 'rights'; the right to share in the crops, or, failing a personal supply of food, the right to feed out of his master's pot, who invariably, when eating, passes the pot over to his slave, and, to his honour be it said, when food is scarce, usually, while eating first, stints himself in quantity that his slave may not complain of hunger. Often have I witnessed this self-denial

on long marches and in times of famine in different parts of South Africa. The slave also is entitled to choose a wife from amongst his fellows, and keeps a household of his own. There is a good deal of method in this consideration for their subordinates—for slaves one cannot rightly call them—as it is desirable to wean them from thoughts of their native country, for with the freedom natural to the life they lead, there is very little in the way to hinder them from deserting at will and leisure. The males, mostly captured in childhood during the wars, when all adults are killed as dangerous, learn to love their captors, who treat them as their own children, instructing them in all the arts necessary to their simple life in companionship with their own offspring. There is hardly any difference made between these and their own flesh and blood until the age of manhood. At that time the difference becomes apparent by the one being allowed to leave his home and strike out a course for himself within the limits of his tribe, while the slave has to remain with his master. Before this stage is reached, however, I have seen a slave and the son of a man carrying equal loads on the march, and sharing their meals out of the same pot which the father and master had impartially passed on to his followers. There may be *individual* differences in the way natives treat their slaves, just as there may be individual differences in the treatment of their own offspring according to the more or less amiable disposition of the individual, but the general rule, laid down by custom, is carried out as described.

In Zanzibar, in 1885, I observed with a good deal of surprise that the Sultan's slaves were allowed freedom to work half the day for themselves in their own gardens, or, by preference, to assume the occupation of porters, to help in the off-loading or lading of ships in the harbours, when they engaged themselves for wages, which they retained for their own uses.

Actual sale of slaves amongst the Baros or other South African tribes is unknown.

Stremboom was rapidly disposing of his newly arrived goods

to the people, and it appeared that our sojourn at the lake was drawing to a close, for the oxen, now fully rested, were quite capable of drawing out the loads, acquired by barter, on the return journey through the sand to Mongwato.

We had noticed a strong reluctance on Stremboom's part to dispose of his goods to the natives for cash. He always preferred to trade in kind for cattle, ostrich feathers, ivory, hippo hide, etc. When, however, cash was brought, it seemed to us that he gave ridiculously little in return for the money, which we thought would, of course, have been a better commodity to transport to the centres whence he drew his supplies than the heavier material obtained in barter. However, as Stremboom was obliged to regulate his prices according to the demand made by natives for their stock in trade, he was anxious, on the one hand, not to formulate a too modest or regular fixed cash value for his article of barter. The natives, who had learnt the use of money in Kimberley, usually wished to have a price fixed on the articles they intended to purchase, which, for reasons already explained, was made unusually high, so they, to get level with these prices, also raised the cash value of their

stock, etc., thus locally reducing the current value of coin. But Stremboom, before dealing, was usually sharp enough to find out the value they fixed on their stock before betraying his own prices.

It was owing to this circumstance that we had been obliged to pay the comparatively

enormous price of seven pounds in cash for the one ox we purchased on our journey down from Indala's, while later we were able to buy another for the ridiculously small equivalent of a five-pound bag of powder, costing not more than ten shillings on the coast.



MARMOSET AT LAKE NGAMI

CHAPTER XXVII

Good-bye to the lake—The Zouga river—Makehto—The runner—We are very hungry—I eat ants—The letter trees—Chief Gumpo nearly killed by a lioness—A game of cards mystifies the natives—Mosquitoes—Spurious lion-hunt in the moonlight—River widens into swamps—Columns of mosquitoes—Bad water—Leave the Zouga—Biting flies—The swearing khoran.

WHILE discussing the probabilities of our journey to Mongwato, Stremboom, who found himself short of various light articles, suggested that Steele should go out with a two-wheeled empty cart and a fresh span of oxen, to return immediately with what he required. This was too good an opportunity to go forward on our journey to be missed by us; for it was a matter easily understood that an empty cart would probably complete the distance in half the time that the more cumbersome and laden wagon would require for the same purpose. Besides, we had no desire to await Steele's return to the lake to fetch the wagon out. We made very light of the fact that we should probably have to walk the whole way, as the cart was too small to permit us all to ride: for we considered it but a poor equivalent for the loss of time to sit on the rails of a wagon dragging at the rate of less than two miles an hour through the sand. Franz, and also Paul, who had elected to remain with us when our boys departed for their homes, not trusting the friendliness of the Baros in this instance to reach beyond the influence of our protection, were to go out with us to Mongwato. And so with many farewells to Stremboom, who was deeply affected at our departure and complained bitterly of the solitude in store for him, the king—who asked me to remember and send him a smart uniform—his wives, the Jacobses, and the chiefs, especially Mashabie, to whom we had taken a great liking, we tossed our bundles of bedding, corn, ammunition, etc., now reduced to

minute dimensions, into the cart, and started off on November 18th, along the Zouga river, walking ahead of the oncoming cart. Hammar, with his foot restored to health, developed a decided interest in the clouds of ducks inhabiting the river, and kept the larder well supplied by peppering away out of the double-choke at them with buck-shot, often dropping six or more at a single shot.

The Zouga river, or Botletle, also called Setaana river by the natives, in that section which connects the lake to the junction with the Tumulakana river, was here over fifty yards broad, and very deep; and had a distinct current flowing towards the lake. The fact that this river's course has been given to flow in opposite directions by travellers who have visited the lake at different times of the year is explained by the situation of the lake, which acts as a reservoir during flood seasons, when all the branches of the Cubango connected with it are full to excess. When, however, the water is retiring, it disgorges its contents along the Zouga bed towards the Makarikari. Influenced by these circumstances, the Zouga varies the course of its current with every alteration in the relative niveau of the streams that feed the lake while running through this extremely flat country. Below the junction of the Zouga with the Tumulakana the current flows constantly towards the Makarikari lake. Twenty miles from the lake we passed a remarkable tree called the Mooi Boom from its beautiful appearance, and, proceeding on the road, we saw much lion spoor, and also passed some recent marks of elephants that had been drinking in the river, but they were too ancient to admit the possibility of a hunt. Another thirteen miles brought us to the second 'letter-trees,' which serve as a landmark in the country. Here it is the custom of travelling whites to perpetuate the fact of having passed through the country by cutting their names into the trees, a piece of frivolity we also complied with. Twenty miles further on we came to Makehtos village, making a total of fifty-three miles from the lake through incessant sand-belts overgrown with bush, often increasing into the magnitude of real forest along

the river banks. The river made several winding détours to the north-east, while the road continued in a more or less direct course through the sand-belts. Occasionally sandstone, alternating with limestone in horizontal layers, probably of the cretaceous era, was visible in the banks of the river, a formation corresponding in a measure with that of the Nata river on the north-east extreme of the Makarikari lake.

Moremi had specially recommended Makehto to assist us in hunting for game in his neighbourhood, as we should require meat for the long journey to Mongwato, while there was but little hope of finding much game further along on this much travelled route.

Of Makehto's wonderful performance on foot when the Matabele invaded the country Moremi could never tell us often enough. It is the duty of Makehto, who is placed in this position for the purpose, to apprise the king by messenger of all events of interest to the nation or king that transpire in his district, such as travellers approaching, elephant troops passing, or any other matter of importance. Makehto became aware of the Matabeles' approach, when they invaded the country, a day before they reached his place. Starting personally early in the morning with the important tidings, he reached the king's kraal at midday and delivered his news, breaking in without ceremony on the astonished council, then discussing other matters in the Kodthla. Without a moment's rest he begged permission of the king to return home to ferry across the Zouga his family and belongings, whom he had left defenceless and helpless while he hurried away with the news, and, starting off, reached his home before dark, and placed his people and goods in safety by taking them over the river that same night, before the Matabele had reached the spot. The king had reminded me to reckon up the distance travelled by this one man between daybreak and dark, and to tell the people I should meet in the outside world of his wonderful performance. As much out of interest as in compliance with the king's wish, I have to state that Makehto travelled quite one hundred miles, allowing for

short cuts, in about fourteen hours, that being a reasonable allowance for the time, making seven and a quarter miles per hour through sandy country for fourteen hours on end. Naturally we went to see this wonderful man, who accompanied me across the Zouga to look at the Tumulakana river and to go shooting. He towered over my head like a young tree. His legs were excessively long and lean compared to his short body, giving him a most unique appearance, which I am at a loss to find a simile for, unless one may utilise a pair of tailor's scissors for the occasion. When walking at his side I tried with all my power to stretch him into a pace that might bring forth a little effort from him, without, however, in the least putting him out. He simply added a few inches to his elastic stride, apparently aware of my intention, and, smiling, stepped easily along like a great ostrich, while I laboured at a pace that usually made my boys trot again to keep up with. Makehto certainly was a marvel! I could not get a good view of the Tumulakana owing to thickets and reeds, but from the description given us regarding its course and size by natives on the spot, we managed to lay its course down more or less accurately (*vide* map). On the way back to the crossing where we had left the canoe, I hit a water-buck hard through the shoulder at one hundred and eighty yards distance. He bounded off into the bush-grown flat, and would have been lost but for Makehto, who ran after him like a demon, crashing through bushes and leaping over smaller trees with gigantic bounds. His shout guided me to the spot some five hundred yards off, where he stood perfectly unruffled, grinning over the carcase of the beast lying dead at his feet. He remarked modestly, when I praised him for his speed, that he usually managed to keep up with buck when it was wounded.

We gave Makehto a good portion of the meat on returning to camp, and then in four good treks reached Samonganga, a native village. From here we kept along the banks of the Zouga for three treks more. The country was of much the same character as usual, bushy, with occasional large trees on the river banks.

Often the road led us a short distance away from the flexures in the river, but never to such a distance that it was too far to send for water from where we camped. On November 25th, we slept at the kraal of a Mosarwa (Bushman) called Manara, who for one of his race was really an opulent individual. He possessed goats and fields of corn, the latter at this time of the year in a hopeless condition of stubble, yet harbouring many guinea-fowl that supplied us with several grateful meals.

Along the Zouga we found several villages of men calling themselves Makuba, which we in this instance understood to be merely a definition of men living in the reeds, as they did not particularly remind us of our giant friends on the upper Cubango and Chobe by any excessive stature, although there was a certain family resemblance in feature amongst all the tribes of the reeds. These men came begging for tobacco with great eagerness, and showed much appreciation for the little gifts of this rather scarce article that we made them.

While skirmishing along the river early one morning in search of game, for as usual our supplies of meat were short, the limited quantity of corn we had brought from the lake with us was exhausted, and we were also disappointed in replenishing our stock from the natives living along the road—all facts responsible for empty stomachs—I espied a Makuba girl wandering in my direction, carrying an inviting-looking dish on her head. She had not seen me, so I quietly slipped behind the trunk of a tree standing by the path she had to pass, and as she came abreast of me I stepped out. Her surprise and consternation were so great that she simply sat down on the ground, with horror marked in every feature of her face, too scared even to scream. With the best conciliatory manner at my disposal I gave her to understand that it was only food I was in search of, by pointing to the dish, which was well filled with a yellow-brown-looking boiled substance resembling porridge, very inviting to my hungry eyes. As soon as she understood my meaning she gladly pushed it towards me. We always went provided with a couple of coloured handkerchiefs on the chance of bartering

food while travelling here, and of these I gave her one in return for her dish of food, eating a little on the spot, and wrapping the remainder up in another cloth to take to the camp. The flavour of this food, which I had mistaken for corn porridge, was very pleasant and rather acid, but certainly not that of corn porridge. However, as it was evidently food, and the girl showed no signs whilst I breakfasted that it was wrong to devour it, I made a fair meal, and then struck after the cart, where I produced the morning's 'haul,' which Paul immediately pronounced to be a mess of stamped flying ants boiled! No one except Paul would eat of it when this information was given, not even Franz. But I, having already had an experience that placed me beyond such trivialities as nausea at the dish, with Paul's able assistance soon put the mess beyond the question of further practical discussion, and registered a note of the excellence of flying ants as a dish quite within reasonable limits to devour when hungry.

On November 27th, we passed a beautiful view on the river, which here begins to widen into a reedy mass, lined with chalk cliffs of moderate height and heavy bush-grown banks on either side. From a point five miles below this we branched off into a sand-belt, to cut off a bend of the river, which a little further on makes a considerable turn southwards, and cost us three good treks through the sand-belts before we reached the welcome sight of the reed-grown river again. At this spot we encountered the letter-trees No. 1. These trees bear the native name Matsiari and are small indifferent growths, which, but for the fact of marking the boundary line between the Baros and Mongwato countries, would not attract the attention of travellers by any special quality. We here also complied with the custom of scratching our names into the bark of these trees, and proceeded on our journey.

Through some mishap the thermometers had all been broken; consequently we were unable to register the temperature, now beginning to be unpleasantly warm during the day, though beautifully cool at night. Thunder-storms commenced to play

in the heavens, which showed the near approach of the rainy season, and, for the first time since leaving Panda Matenga in June, we found it necessary to erect the tent for shelter against rain.

November 28th was notable to us for camping at the Haarde Kol Boom, a landmark on the route, and next day, some ten miles ahead, we passed a large open flat where springbok are reported to exist. Spite of a search we saw nothing of these, but I managed to kill a couple of steenbok at the edge of the forest bordering the flat. On the 30th November we reached a large pan crowded with spur-winged geese and ducks, against whom Hammar particularly levelled his attentions together with the double choke, and made a very good bag.

Near this pan lived a small chief called Gumpo, who had a disagreeable experience with a lion, likely to have cost him his life but for the intervention of a white man who happened to be camped there at the time.

The cattle were grazing on the open flat near the edge of the forest, when the herd came running in with the information that a lioness was stalking them in the open daylight, and had just hidden herself in a little round bush that stood isolated in the flat. Gumpo and two of his men were conversing with the white man at the moment, and no sooner heard the news than they begged for guns with which to shoot the lioness, who was the pest of that neighbourhood. On receiving the guns the three of them ran off, hardly giving the white man time to snatch up his own gun and follow them. Regardless of the shouts he gave for them to go slower, so as to keep their wind for steady shooting, they ran on, followed by the white man, until they came to within eighty yards of the bush, running abreast of each other, as if the killing of the lion depended on the rush they made, when she charged out like a streak at them without uttering a sound. Gumpo, who was on the right, and his two companions hurriedly fired as she came on, and of course missed in their excitement. On she came, snapping at the air in her strides, and sprang on to Gumpo, whom she knocked over

like a wooden peg, and stood growling over him, while the other two, rooted to the spot with terror, could only shout '*Mokui ukei?*' '*Mokui ukei?*' 'Where is the white man?' 'Where is the white man?' At that moment he was one hundred and twenty yards away, and fired, hitting the lioness behind the shoulder. She looked round, and would have charged at the shot, but that Gumpo, feeling her grasp relax on him, endeavoured to free himself, when she took him across the buttocks and shook him as a cat does a rat. Meanwhile the white man, approaching a few yards nearer again, hit her behind the shoulder, when she dropped Gumpo, and once more looked like charging, standing for a few seconds undecided how to act, just long enough for the white man to load and take aim at her neck, and this time she dropped stone dead to the shot.

Gumpo, feeling himself released, quite dazed in the reaction from the mauling and shaking he had received, ran off heedless of shots to stop, and continued running until he dropped from sheer exhaustion and shock. He was carried home, where he had his wounds attended to, and eventually recovered from his hurts.

While resting here Hammar and I played a game at cards, much to the mystification of the natives, who looked on in grave wonder, evidently deeply interested, until we had finished, when the head man amongst them reverently asked us what the result of our 'bone throwing' had revealed to us. We could not resist the temptation of telling him we had learnt that Hammar was to receive a beautiful pipe—the stake we had played for and which he had won—on his arrival in Mongwato. He appeared sadly disappointed to think that we had wasted so much time, and invoked the intervention of our favourite spirits, causing them so much trouble, for so trivial a consideration, and probably went away with the impression that we were a 'poor lot.'

On ahead we passed a backwater creek of the Zouga river round which we were obliged to travel. The banks of this creek harboured many guinea-fowl very wild to get at. The country

now became more open, and was sparsely covered with small trees and brushwood. Although the evening was cool, a foretaste of the awakening mosquitoes we had experience of a few nights previously induced me to pitch the net, under which I made my bed. Hammar and Steele laughed at the idea of mosquitoes, as it was too cool for them to come that night; with a word of warning to them not to attempt to enter my net in the night in case the mosquitoes appeared, as they were too lazy to pitch their own nets, I turned over and went to sleep lulled by the sound of a lion roaring in the distance.

Near midnight I was awakened by a terrible commotion; the oxen were lowing restlessly, the servants were hurriedly building large fires amidst shouts to each other to hasten up, while Hammar and Steele were dancing about in what looked like Highland costume, each one with one end of a mosquito net in his hands that had the other end fixed to the tail of the cart. They were trying to pitch the nets, furiously slapping the while at their bare legs on which myriads of mosquitoes were regaling themselves. Their distress would have excited pity from any one, but for the ludicrous appearance they cut, hopping about in the dim firelight. The mosquitoes were on us with a vengeance. During the night it had suddenly grown warm with the fall of the breeze, and the mosquitoes, attracted by the light of our fires, came straight from the Zouga swamps in countless numbers to the camp, with a humming roar that sounded like the beat of surf from a distant ocean. It was perfectly terrible, and the servants endeavoured by lighting large fires, on which they threw green branches, to increase the volumes of smoke, hoping to secure a little immunity from their attacks by lying between the fires. The oxen, in a perfect frenzy from the stings, tore at the yokes to which they were tethered, and would have inevitably got loose or played havoc with the cart, had we not ordered the servants to remove them and tie them with double reins to some trees standing close by, where they kept up a grievous complaining, lowing all night, stamping in the earth, and pawing the loose sand over their bodies in

great distress. We were not afraid of their being attacked by lions at that distance from the fires, for there was little fear that even these beasts would face the swarms of mosquitoes.

Hammar and Steele at last crawled under their nets; but the last state was nearly as bad as the first, for multitudes of mosquitoes had got in with them, and they spent the greater part of the night in destroying these by catching them in their hands, and expressing great wonder that a wise Creator could permit the existence of such pests.

I lay quietly, well protected from all molestation by my square net with its linen top, in a certain sense enjoying the situation, with that evil spirit of rejoicing in others' woes inherent in the instincts of all humanity when safe itself. When the much wished for daylight came at last the mosquitoes retired, and we lost no time in getting on the road, for we had yet to travel several days along the Zouga, with the prospect of this experience being repeated nightly until we were well clear of the river.

The previous evening, while we were trekking merrily along in the bright moonlight before camping, singing a chorus song to while away the tedium of travel, I was sitting inside the cart for a short rest, and Hammar and Steele were tramping along behind, when suddenly Franz, who was driving the oxen, yelled out in great consternation: 'Baas, baas, here comes a lion full tilt at the cart.' We were crossing a bare hard sandy flat at the time, from which the retiring waters of the Zouga had just receded, leaving a damp level open space that glittered in the moonlight, exposing every small object with perfect clearness to view. Hammar and Steele shouted to me for their guns, which I hastily handed out to them from the cart, and seizing my own rifle, I jumped down to see where the lion was. Paul, who was voorlooping (leading the oxen) abandoned his position, and took up a more secure one between the wheels of the cart, while Franz dived into its inner recesses amongst our blankets, and the scared oxen, coming round with a

sweep, got mixed up in one intricate bundle of horns, heads, yokes, etc., which took some righting when the scare was over. Where was the lion? Franz bawled out in answer, 'Daar, op rechter hand' ('There, on the right hand'); and sure enough there lay a dark object on the open sand eighty yards off. Somewhat sceptical I asked, 'Did you see it move?' when Franz assured us that he not only saw it move, but could clearly discern its legs as it trotted along, but when he shouted it lay down. It was quite evident that the beast meant mischief, so I waited till the excitement of my companions abated somewhat, and then organised a systematic advance on the animal, which lay perfectly quiet watching us. Five yards apart, so that the beast could not attack more than one of us at a time, we slowly moved on the lion until within forty yards, expecting every moment that it would charge, and Steele, being the middle man, was accorded first shot. Bang, phup, went the shot, but the beast never stirred a hair, that we could see. Then Hammar fired when Steele had reloaded, and I also had a shot in my turn, yet he never moved. The probability was that Steele had killed him by the first shot, at least he said so. We now moved nearer in the same order as before, and still nearer until we could clearly make out that it was merely a scrubby bush we had been making excellent practice at in the moonlight, and no lion or other animal at all. Of course Steele received our hearty congratulations for the splendid accuracy of that 'first shot' he had so emphatically claimed; then we went to put our mixed span of oxen to rights, and proceeded on the journey.

Franz's explanation of his conduct in diving into the cart at the moment of danger, instead of coming to help us with his gun, did credit to the ineffective policy he always displayed in 'tight places.' He said, 'Ik was niet bang maar voorsigtig' ('I was not afraid, but careful.')

His mistaking this bush for a lion was easily explained. Sitting in the front of the cart with the whip in his hand, he probably was thinking of nothing in particular, when looking round he saw the dark object close to the cart shifting its

relative position against the dark background in the distance as the cart proceeded, and quite naturally, in the hurry of the moment, imagined the object had a movement of its own. To a diluted mind like his it was no great effort in imagination to add the legs, claws, and contour of a lion to this object. Hence the scare. The behaviour of the oxen surprised us most, for it was their evident terror, guided as we thought by unerring instinct, that convinced us more than anything else that we had a lion to deal with. We could only account for their behaviour by admitting that here was a complete case of communication of ideas from man to beast, a subject we had often discussed previously on our journey.

Instead of being able to obtain corn in barter from the natives, as we had hoped, we found to our dismay that a famine had ravaged this part of the land, and that the natives themselves were in great straits. Things were so bad that we on several occasions had to supply a little food, all we could spare, to travelling Mongwatos we met, who came to us in great distress.

To one living in civilisation, where one can just 'go round the corner,' and by paying for it obtain a good meal, it may seem that I harp on the food question with too much persistency. But to one who knows such veldt, where game is scarce, it will be more comprehensible to what distressing proportions this question can grow, when there is a long journey to be accomplished, and no direct provision has been made for the party.

One may be actually passing close to game, and be none the wiser in this bush-grown country, or, on the other hand, unsuccessfully devote days to hunting in a district devoid of game, while all the time it is necessary to keep going ahead and waste no time; for in the 'beyond' one always expects relief. However, we hoped to be able to purchase corn from Pompey, a chief on ahead. We were now close to the river again, having previously been compelled to strike far out into the sand-belts on account of the many backwater creeks extending into the flats from the Zouga. The river here is one mass of reeds, like the Chobe,

with the opposite bank not visible, though islands with kolahni palms are plentiful in its expanse. During the early morning hours the mosquitoes circled in vast round columns high into the air above the reeds of the river, with the base of the column on the reeds. We counted more than a dozen such columns in sight from one point, the furthest about three miles off. They appeared like a dense cloudy mass of dust upheld by whirlwinds, and at first we mistook these columns for this by no means unusual phenomenon in South Africa, when a whirlwind passing over a burnt flat or open space licks up all finer particles of material and, carrying them straight up into the air, forms a vast column many hundred feet high that travels for miles over the country, finally dropping its component parts, leaves, bits of stick, dust, etc., in showers on to the ground. A whirlwind has been known to empty a large pan of water and carry the contents away, including fish and frogs, for six miles, to my personal knowledge. On one occasion I saw two fowls drop from the skies, which must have been carried at least eight miles by a whirlwind, as there was no farmstead nearer than that distance to the spot where they landed on the ground, of course in a dead condition. A differential point between these whirlwind columns and those composed of mosquitoes is that the latter, appearing only in the morning and evening over swampy country, remain stationary, while the upper portions of the column are swayed gently backward and forward by the gentle breezes prevailing at that time, and that their component parts bite severely at night, whereas the whirlwind is mostly observed during the heat of the day, when the difference of temperature in the separate air layers is most pronounced, and brings about this peculiar phenomenon, which travels steadily, often at a considerable speed, over the country.

Arrived at Pompey's, we were lucky enough to be able to institute a trade for corn, paying fabulous prices for mealies, as much as one pound in cash for a bucketful, so as once and for all to have a sufficient supply to support us to Mongwato.

This night the mosquitoes again visited us, if anything with

more virulence than before, and our poor oxen spent a wretched time, tied to trees which they vainly tugged at, to break away from the awful torments they endured. We ourselves were well protected by the nets, which, when properly pitched and tucked under the skins forming the underlay of our beds, effectively kept the mosquitoes out. But our servants deserted us *en masse*, and fled for miles into the sand-belts, where they spent the night beyond the reach of their tormentors. They had gone so far, in self-protection, that they only returned towards eight o'clock next morning. A few nights of this, we felt sure, would have killed the oxen, who were much swollen about the nose, eyes, ears, and other soft parts of their bodies, from the bites.

The river water in this neighbourhood was weakly diluted with a salt giving it a most unpleasant taste, which also acted as a strong laxative, very weakening to the cattle.

Nine miles beyond Pompey's we reached the point where the road to Mongwato leaves the river, and enters the bushy country lying between here and Thlakane, the first perennial water on the road that can be relied upon for watering cattle. In the neighbourhood of Pompey's and the 'Turn Away,' Nature, not satisfied with tormenting us with mosquitoes all night, provides a stinging blood-sucking fly, much like the common house fly in size and appearance, but of a greyer colour, to harass humanity during daylight. These little plagues, appearing in great numbers, settled all over us without even the preliminary introduction of a buzz, and, if left for a moment, inserted their sharp stings into our skins in a manner that kept our arms going like a set of waving dervishes to frighten them off. All's well that ends well, however, for, with a five mile track on the 4th December away from the river banks to a small pan of water lying in the belt, we distanced our dual tormentors, mosquitoes and flies alike. The water of this anonymous pan we found less brackish than the supply of river water we had brought with us in the casks, so we refilled them here and trekked on a mile to another small pan which we found more brackish again. Here we rested the poor cattle till

late next day, intending to push on during the following night as far as we could towards Thlakane.

The country here supported innumerable black and white khoran, a variety nicknamed by the Boers the 'Vlug Vogel,' swearing bird, from the peculiar call it gives when flying up from the ground into the air. This call sounds much like the Dutch invocation, 'Ja Vrachtig, Ja Vrachtig!' an expression the Boers look upon as profane when applied in ordinary conversation. From this they have given it the above-mentioned name. We had less concern with the bird's questioned morality than with its qualities of excellence for the pot. But they are so wary by nature that other measures than an ordinary kick up and a flying shot are necessary to bring them within the influence of the kitchen fire. How this bird, which from its surroundings is certainly not much if ever hunted here, acquired its extreme wariness is a riddle not easily solved, but another quality it possesses in a marked degree, inquisitiveness, was the undoing of a sufficient number to supply us at least with one good meal. Guided by their croaking call while on the ground, it was only necessary to approach within eighty yards, at which distance they began to be suspicious, and then quickly to hide behind some convenient stump or ant-heap with the rifle hidden in readiness to shoot. Before long the bird, which had crouched in the grass, would peep up, and betray his exact whereabouts, looking of course for the hunter, whose disappearance he could not account for. Then, not satisfied, he would jump on to the nearest ant-heap and inspect the neighbourhood, whereupon a bullet would end his career. There are several other kinds of khoran in Africa which can be easily shot over dogs, but none, even in the most populous districts, ever display the wariness of this bird.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Meet Mosarwas, who show us water—Thlakane water-pits, bad water—Mongwato cattle stand thirst well—Reach Haakedoorn Vley—Good water—Paul and the goat are great friends—Trek Boers of 1879 suffer thirst at Malatzwe—About the trek Boers—The Lichachane water-hole—About the water-pans—We cross the Pooh-Pooh sand-belt under trying circumstances—A strong Mongwato—Hear that Rudolf shot a big elephant.

IN the afternoon we inspanned, and started on our two days' journey without water towards Thlakane. The first ten miles brought us to the Tschookootza salt pan, quite unfit for use as drinking water, and then, in the moonlight, we made another eight miles, and let the oxen graze on the moist grass to refresh themselves with what little water they might absorb from the dew. A short two hours later we were on the road again, and completed nine miles more before daybreak, when it was time to rest the cattle and let them feed, with the intention that they should have the full benefit of the dew, now lying plentifully on the grass, before the sun's rays should evaporate the moisture. A further trek of thirteen miles brought us within a single trek of Thlakane about noon, when some Mosarwas came to our camp, attracted by the cracking of our whip. Hearing that we were strangers, never likely to travel the country again, they volunteered the information that there was good water about three miles off, to the *left* of the road facing Mongwato. We bargained with them to give our oxen a drink, and, on condition that we should not follow them up, they went off with the oxen, returning, within an hour, with the cattle well filled out with water. We had our misgivings at first about trusting the cattle to their sole care to go to the water, but Steele assured us that Khama's influence was so great, even in this outlying district, that there was no fear of treachery. We paid these good fellows with

tobacco and a six-foot piece of cloth for their services and knowledge, which, I hope, may be of use to other travellers in this desert. Five miles more exactly brought us to Thlakane, a succession of water-pits, roughly fifteen feet in diameter, lying in what might at one time have been a river-bed, probably conducting water from the Zouga to the Limpopo. The neighbourhood is wooded with thorny bush, out of which several kohlani trees project high into the air, while, underneath, are many ant-heaps, eight feet and more in height, of a peculiar pointed shape.

These pits lay in a chalky formation, and contained brackish water hardly fit for use, and also somewhat aperient in its action, a bad look-out for our cattle, which were having a rough time altogether, first with the mosquitoes and flies, and now with the water. We had made forty-six miles on end in twenty-three hours. Of course we ourselves had walked the whole way to spare the cattle, deeming it advisable not to add our weight to that of the cart, for the lake oxen are a poor lot to travel any distance without water, to which they are accustomed in great quantity from the time they are born, quite unlike the Mongwato oxen, whose owners, cognisant of the long dry journeys their cattle will have to endure in the future, water them regularly only once every other day, with a view to hardening them, an experiment that has proved eminently successful in its result.

Clouds of Namakwa partridges, as they are called, which are best described as birds appearing to be a cross somewhere between a dove and a partridge, hovered over and settled at the pits to drink, giving Hammar a chance of slaughtering great numbers with the shot-gun. The flesh was dark and very good eating. These birds, when settled in flocks, had the appearance of a flock of pigeons, save for the free gait peculiar to pigeons; they made comical little runs, and then crouched in the sand, continuing this mode of advance until they reached the water's edge, where they drank and preened themselves much after the manner of pigeons, which they also resemble in size.

Haakedoorn Vley, the next pan ahead, reported to be two good treks from here, we heard from some passing natives, contained excellent water.

Hammar obtained a longitudinal observation at Thlakane, but missed the latitude by some mischance in the night; and as we could always rectify this by another latitude, to be taken on ahead, up to which point we could travel by dead reckoning and the compass, we went on without losing time, and trekked eight miles on the 7th December, when, halting at mid-day, the latitude matter was adjusted. Twelve miles travelled in the night brought us to Haakedoorn Vley, which we found, to our intense satisfaction, contained splendidly flavoured water, a great contrast to the saline stuff we had been using for several days previously, which, although gifted with medicinal qualities, was decidedly unpalatable to drink. We congratulated ourselves on this change, over many cups of tea, of which we never seemed to be able to drink enough, after the unpleasant past experiences.

We rested all day at Haakedoorn Vley, and towards evening proceeded on our journey, trekking, with short intervals to rest the oxen, on to the Malatzwye pits of water, where we arrived at 8 A.M. next morning.

Paul had made great friends with a huge grey goat we had brought from the lake with us, to kill as a stand-by in case of hunger. The affection these two displayed towards each other was quite extraordinary. Paul shared his bed with the goat, who often got the best of the one blanket, which constituted the sleeping arrangements of Paul's economy, and often Paul would be heard expostulating with his partner in the night, when he woke stiff and cold, to find that the goat had carefully rolled him out of occupation and taken up the best position in the bed, as a matter of right, pertaining to his superior 'cuteness. This goat followed Paul about in the execution of all his daily duties, such as cattle-herd or water-fetcher, etc., and we, therefore, to test his staunchness in friendship, one day told Paul to remain behind when the cart started. The goat followed the cart for some yards, much perplexed at Paul's delay, then turned

and bleated vigorously for him to come on, running backwards and forwards between the fast-receding cart and the recalcitrant Paul, in evident distress. At last its patience gave out, and, taking a short run, it butted Paul so severely from behind to wake him up, that he was glad to hurry up matters a bit, followed by the goat, who kept well behind, prepared with another dose of its panacea to keep him up to the mark. We fairly gave in with laughing over this comical event, and made a gift of the goat to Paul on the spot.

We calculated the distance from Haakedoorn Vley to the Malatzwye pits to be twenty-one miles through heavy sand.



VIEW OF KALAHARI DESERT NEAR MALATZWYE

This pit is situated in the middle of a large sand-belt, overgrown with scrub, in a quartzite formation that crops up at this spot.

It was at Malatzwye that the Trek Boers of 1879 suffered the most harrowing disasters from thirst, on their long journey through the desert with their heavily-laden wagons. They had reached Shoshong from the Transvaal in safety, and had arranged with Khama for their free passage through to the lake, but, from mistrust of his motives, refused to adopt the advice to cross the desert in small parties of three or four wagons at a time, given by Khama in excellent faith, as he knew that the small amount of water at the pans and pits by the way would not suffice for the wants of a large party. This advice seemed

suspicious to the Boers, for it appeared as if he wished to split up the party from sinister motives of his own. A council of the leaders having come to this decision, the whole trek, over three hundred wagons strong, burst simultaneously into the desert with a rush that plainly meant : ‘ Heaven protect the hindmost ! ’ They thrashed their oxen along, often eight waggons abreast, between the small trees growing in the sand-belts, in great anxiety to reach the water pans in advance of each other. Naturally those in the van exhausted the supply of water at each pan as they reached it, and it had not a possible chance to collect again before the next party arrived. They, instead of returning to the place called Thlaballa, on the back track, where there was a permanent supply of water, pushed forward, in the wake of the rest, until the oxen dropped exhausted or dead in the yokes. No one had a thought for the other, it was forward at every cost, and each one for himself. At Malatzweye things came to a climax. Water there was none ; and the exhausted oxen were dying one by one, and could pull the wagons no further. There was but one way to save the lives of women and children, and that was to abandon the wagons and goods, and with light sleds, improvised out of the neighbouring trees, to force their way on ahead until water was reached, or they died. Mothers, with babies, expired of thirst, their dead children in their arms, while the distracted fathers, when the last of the cattle had dropped dead in the yokes from thirst, hurried ahead with fevered throats, to seek water, hoping to return before the rest of the family had died. A panic set in, and there was no help or mercy for a fellow man in his distress. Those who had a little water in their casks hid the precious fluid from sight or knowledge of the others, to lave, in secret, the throats of their own infants, and the other poor unfortunates were left to die. With ruthless improvidence the leaders kept on ahead, emptying all the pans as they reached them, never passing or leaving one intact for the use of those in distress behind. They had got the lead, and by strengthening their cattle with the water at each point, they easily kept it

until they reached Thlakane, the first permanent water to be depended on after leaving Thlaballa. From Thlakane the leaders returned with all haste, carrying water to relieve the distress of their fellows behind, and, by a proper organisation, saved the lives of many who would otherwise have inevitably perished most miserably of thirst. Even as it was, there was great mortality amongst those who were last on the trek, as is testified by the unburied remains; skulls and bones were found lying at different places near the road where some poor mortals had breathed their last. The most pathetic relics of this cruel misfortune were the skulls of several children lying near Malatzweye, for the distressed trekkers found no time to bury the dead.

It must have been terrible! Many of the trekkers, who finally succeeded in reaching Thlakane with their most valuable belongings and families packed on sledges, were so disheartened by their misfortunes that they would not face the terrors of thirst again to go in and fetch their wagons out, but simply let them remain as they were left standing, oftentimes with oxen dead in the yokes, and made arrangements to proceed by the help of their co-trekkers. We passed the wreckage, such as wheels and ironwork, of many of these deserted wagons, for Khama, although well aware of their desertion, disdained to appropriate any of the Dutchmen's goods, and gave strict orders to his people not to interfere with them. However, it is related that he sent off supplies of water on the track of the sufferers, and by this timely assistance was instrumental in saving the lives of a few sufferers. The reason the deserted wagons had fallen to pieces so shortly after their abandonment was probably owing to the grass fires that had ignited and burnt the lighter woodwork of the wagons, while the more solid portions, such as wheels, etc., remained intact.

Some of the Mosarwas in the desert could not overcome their natural instinct to at least institute a search for food amongst the deserted goods of the Boers. One of these parties discovered a sack of coffee-beans, which from the nature of the

surroundings and packing they correctly estimated to be an edible; but they prepared it as food, by gravely boiling the beans in the same way as they would boil corn, and when the food was cooked soft enough, sat down round the pot and started to eat it like ordinary mealies. After desperate efforts to finish the meal they came to the conclusion that white men's stomachs were differently constituted from those of the Mosarwas, to be able to assimilate such vile stuff.

Selous, who for some time utilised this road to hunt in the Mababe district, and other hunters, have suffered many hardships from thirst while traversing this inhospitable road with their heavily-laden wagons.

We considered ourselves exceptionally lucky in finding the route so well supplied with water at this time of the year, when it is usually dried up.

After a good rest we departed from the friendly shade of a beautiful tree at Malatzwe, late in the afternoon of the 9th December, and made a short trek of four and a half miles, and then slept till the moon rose, when we made two short treks more of six miles each to the Nkawane pan. This pan, a large one, was dry, and there was not enough water to fill a kettle of respectable size in a hole dug by the trek Boers on one side of the pan. Here the distress amongst the trek Boers seems to have been greatest; for the fragments of wagons, ironwork, etc., lying about were so numerous as to resemble the débris of a shipwreck. We rested here, intending to send the oxen back to Malatzwe next day to water them, and then push through the long thirsty stretch that lay before us, going night and day until we reached the water on the other side of the famous long Pooh-Pooh sand-belt we now had to cross, so named from the frequent calls of the turkey buzzards that inhabit this district in great number, whose notes have a deep, resonant, metallic chest sound, in effect not unlike the name given to the sand-belt.

Before sending the oxen back, however, I went on to a place about a mile ahead to the right, trusting to a tradition that

water might be found there. I came upon a shallow dry watercourse, which I followed to the right for a few hundred yards, where, attracted by some dry bushes evidently concealing something, I discovered, on removing them, a little hole of water about four feet in diameter. To convince myself of a supply by the depth of it, I put a short stick into the pit, but did not reach the bottom. Content with this, I returned and brought the cart up to the place. To enable the oxen to drink, we had to form a trough by packing sand round a hollow depression in the sandstone rock that formed the bed of the watercourse, and ladling the water into this, we brought the oxen up by twos, and thus in succession gave the lot a good drink all round.

One of our oxen fell into the mouth of this pit, and it was only with considerable difficulty we got him out again. The water that had sunk in the pit as we ladled it out rose in a short time to its original level, so that before dark we were able to give our cattle a second drink. Steele, who was inquisitive regarding the nature of this hole, took our twelve-foot long whipstick, and passed it down the hole without touching bottom; but the disturbance of this and our ladling together fetched up such a fœtid stench from the depths that we were actually obliged to shift camp for purer air. We had, fortunately, filled all our vessels with sweet water from the top before this *contretemps* occurred, and did not mind much what caused the stench, as our supply was sufficient to last through the dry stretch before us. This little water-hole, which we heard afterwards was known as the Lichachane, must have a fountain at its base that keeps the level permanent. We stayed here during the 10th, occasionally giving the oxen a drink of the impure water, which seemed not to disagree with them in the least, and on the 11th buckled up for our rush across the Pooh-Pooh sand-belts. As a preliminary we made a very easy trek to where a track branches off to the left that leads to a problematic pan of water called Machakabe, of which, as we had no information, we decided to fight shy. This

branch track joins the main road again. We outspanned here, intending to travel for all we were worth in the cool of evening and the night. But when we resumed the journey we found a little pan of beautifully clear water four miles ahead, which delighted us with its unexpected appearance and freshness. A heavy thunderstorm had evidently passed here a few days previously, and filled this little hollow with water. In a very short time we had emptied out all our Lichachane fluid and replenished our small casks, bottles, etc., with the beautiful rain-water, and, to make matters easy, decided to rest another day here, after giving our oxen a good drink that evening. Through some strange presentiment that all was not right, I woke about midnight and walked over to the pan, and discovered that nearly all the water had disappeared. I gave the alarm at once, and before long we were all digging a trench in the soft sand with our hands to collect the little remaining water; we then drove the oxen up for a drink. Without further delay we inspanned and trekked on. This opportune pan had helped us eight miles over our difficulty.

These pans are the result of a collection of rain-water in some chance hollow or depression in the desert, lined at the bottom with a coating of mud that has been washed out of the neighbouring soil, and deposited in sufficient quantity to form an impermeable layer strong enough to hold water if left undisturbed. However, when perforated by such agencies as the feet of oxen, or by means of a foolish attempt to dig a well to concentrate the water, the continuity of the mud layer is disturbed, and the water leaks out into the underlying sand, thereby completely frustrating any attempts to ensure a better supply for a length of time. The effect of breaking the mud layer is the same as if so much water had been spilt in the sandy desert, and one vainly tries to collect it again.

Some of the larger pans, such as Haakedoorn Vley and Nkawana, possess a thicker layer of mud at their bottoms, which in a moderate measure withstand the perforating action of oxen's feet, and consequently are considered as more or less

secure to reckon on for water when the seasons have not been unusually dry. But since the Boers in their distress dug the well we found at Nkawana, this pan has ceased to hold water, and will only become serviceable again when the hole has been silted up, and is re-covered by the mud layer.

The pits on this route, Thlakane, Malatzweye, Lichachane, and Thlaballa, however, are not dependent for water upon rains in the same measure as the pans, but derive their supplies from underground sources.

Somewhat upset by losing the advantage of making the desirable afternoon start from our last camp, we considered that any benefit derived from the presence of this pan was neutralised by its compelling us to begin the long journey across the Pooch-Pooch belt at a more unfavourable time of day for the cattle, as we now should have to break the neck of the journey in the warm daytime instead of during the cooler night. However, we trekked off cheerfully enough; for, after all, with our nearly empty cart it was child's play compared with the travelling difficulties of loaded wagons. A short way ahead we found the Machakabe track rejoining the main road, and we were now fairly launched on the Pooch-Pooch sand-belt. Fortunately the weather proved cool during the day, and we passed agreeably through a scene seldom to be found in that part of the country; for it had rained lately, and the desert was clad with green, delicate-looking, straight grass, growing almost luxuriantly between slender short trees that waved their leafy tops in the cool breezes. But the weariness of that trudge through incessant sand, sand, and sand again, for six long, dreary treks, going day and night with only short outspans to rest the oxen, who towards the last lay down exhausted as soon as released from the yoke, until we kicked them up again to resume the journey, will long be remembered by us. With lack-lustre eyes and faltering gait, the oxen at last could hardly pull any further, and the flogging to force them along was fearful. Franz, now in his element again, shrieked, yelled, and danced like a fury alongside of the flagging cattle, sending

resounding cracks from the thong of his long whip at the miserable creatures, who, as before mentioned, were like cattle, unaccustomed to live, even when not working, for many hours together without water. We kept on, hoping to reach a pan reported to hold water some miles this side of Thlaballa, for which place we were making; but at last the oxen lay down in the yokes quite done up and impervious to all attempts to make them rise. We unyoked them, and let them lie to rest a little, and then, taking a gun, I seized a thick sjambok, and, whacking them all up, drove them before me along the road towards Thlaballa. All of the others except Paul, whom I took with me, lay down to sleep. It was only a few miles to a green-looking valley ahead. Franz had told me to search for water on the left, quite close to the road, but as we approached the place, the cattle, led astray by the scent of moisture from the green valley below, started off at a run, mad with thirst, in search of water. We managed to keep six together, but two got clear away and careered down the valley as if possessed, while we had our work cut out to prevent the others from following them. We were in hopes that these two would return to rejoin the others when they found themselves alone, but this they showed no inclination to do. At last we spied the pan glittering amongst some trees close by, and the cattle at the same moment became aware of the fact. It was now a race who should get there first; for the pan being small, I wished to fill the casks and canvas bags we had brought before the cattle stirred up the mud. Pell-mell ahead we went, reaching the pan simultaneously, in a cloud of dust thrown up by the rushing cattle, who ran knee-deep into the water, and shoved their noses down almost to the bottom in their eagerness, drinking the cool water in long sweeping draughts that did one good to see. We also rushed in and succeeded in filling our water-vessels before the mud was stirred up, and then set off after the truants, who by this had gone over a mile, and were standing lowing in great perplexity and doubt which way to turn for water. We drove them up the valley, where they soon

espied the others, now cropping the herbage by the pan, to which they ran and also at last found the water. Just as we were thinking it was time to turn the cattle, who were beginning to stray, one gave a grunting low, and they all came rushing back to the water, with tails in the air, to have another drink.

I then sent Paul back with the cattle and a canvas bag of water, remaining myself to await the arrival of the cart.

A Herculean, wiry-looking Mongwato meanwhile arrived from Shoshong, driving an enormous pack-ox, well laden with coloured handkerchief cloths in small bales, tobacco, and other trading articles. Besides this ox, he drove a two-year-old bull. He off-loaded the pack from his ox, weighing at least three hundred pounds, and came to converse with me, asking after the water on ahead. On hearing that the small pans between here and Lichachane were empty, he appeared distressed, for he mentioned that he was proceeding to the Zouga river to trade for ostrich feathers on his own behalf, and had hoped that the previous rains, having filled the pans, would make his journey across the Pooh-Pooh and through the desert an easy task. I advised him to try the Machakabe pan, as so far, to our knowledge, no travellers had yet paid it a visit. I bantered him on his temerity in risking this long journey alone and without apparent food. In answer he pointed to his two sharp assegais and an enormous knob-stick he carried, and said that he was prepared for all-comers, lions included. It was not by any means the first time that he had made the journey alone. As for food, he would walk till quite hungry, and then slaughter the bull either at Malatzwye or Haakedoorn Vley, where he would rest and make biltong, and after a good feed would go on again. I reminded him that he might be attacked while asleep, to which he answered that he only slept a little during the middle of the day, when nothing was stirring, and travelled all night as a rule. Near Haakedoorn Vley there were some friendly Mosarwas whom he knew, and with whom he usually rested.

He was a nervous, fiery-tempered individual, in a great hurry to put the most of the Pooh-Pooh sand behind him that night, and as the sun wended its course towards the horizon, and the cool of the evening approached, he eagerly loaded up his ox, and, seizing his weapons, disappeared along the sandy road amongst the bushes.

This man was a unique character even amongst his tribe, for those we asked concerning him confessed that it was not by any means usual for a single man to tackle the journey; mostly men went in groups, for the sake of protection on the journey; but this individual wished to keep the centres of his trade a secret, and therefore went alone. Anyhow, it is a task I should have been very loth to attempt myself.

The distance from Lichachane to this pan was fifty-eight miles, a long weary trek with tired oxen, that none of us are likely to forget in a hurry; for the slow pace we were obliged to go at to keep with the cart was much more fatiguing than the quicker pace we would have preferred to make. We had to keep with the cart, however, because we never knew at what particular point our cattle might give in, and it was therefore not advisable for us to walk ahead.

We could understand now what the Trek Boers must have suffered when they reached Nkawane after crossing the Pooh-Pooh sand-belt, and found the water gone.

When the cart arrived we rested and sent for our boys who had accompanied us to the Zambesi from Shoshong, as we were informed that they lived near here at one of Khama's cattle posts. The elder one, Januari, came at once, but the other, Ramkujan, was away hunting. His father, a decrepit old man, however, appeared in his place, not to miss the chance of the probable presents he expected on his son's behalf. They told us that Januari and Ramkujan, with Rudolf, had come out with George Westbeech and his wagons, and that Rudolf had recovered completely from his fever. On the way out Rudolf had shot a big bull elephant at Nata, that had enormous tusks, with the gun I left him (the .577 single express in which

the extractor had gone wrong). He had walked ahead of the wagons with Ramkujan, and near the water they saw the elephant rubbing his neck against a large haardekol-tree. Rudolf crawled up and hit the elephant with his shot behind the shoulder. The elephant just stood and swayed about like a drunken man, and then fell over on its side. They had a great feast of elephant meat while resting at Nata, and Westbeeck shared the ivory with Rudolf, who now was in Cleksdorp.

We gave them several odds and ends now no longer of use to us, and with kindly expressions which they sent after us, accompanied by much snapping of fingers in sign of their appreciation, we trekked on that evening to lessen the distance between us and Thlaballa.

CHAPTER XXIX

Reach Thlaballa water, and put the thirst behind us—Franz regains his spirits and is impudent—I have the first shave for nine months—Hard ground again—Hearty welcome of the Shoshong traders—Khama sends for me to hear of our voyage—We leave Shoshong with Piet Grobelaar—Grobelaar's difference with Khama—We cross the Limpopo river—Crocodiles kill sheep—We visit Khamani, Khama's brother—Potgieter's farm in the Waterberg and the hot sulphur springs—The high veldt again—Game preserve at Grobelaar's farm.

Two short treks brought us to Thlaballa, a succession of big open holes in the fine sand which draw a large supply of water from some underground source. Here the two roads that come from the Zambesi and the lake respectively join and continue as one to Shoshong. We pushed on in the night, as our provisions were exhausted, and then rested a little. Franz, who, now nearing home, showed unwonted insolence, chiding us for halting so often, and otherwise misbehaving himself, got a severe scolding that would have been accompanied by harsher measures but for the thoughts of the past hardships we had endured in common.

Two more treks brought us at midday to a water called Leklotzi, where we noticed fresh wagon spoor coming from the Zambesi, which gave rise to some speculation as to whose it might be. There were rumours that a great revolution had taken place in Barotziland, and that Lebossi the king was killed; consequently we attributed the origin of these tracks to the missionaries, who might have found it necessary to fly the country. Afterwards we learned that this was an error, and that the tracks were simply those of one of Khama's hunting parties.

At Leklotzi I had a shave—the first for nine and a half

months—which altered my appearance to such an extent that Paul was for a few minutes in some doubt as to my identity.

One trek ahead, where we camped for the night, a violent thunderstorm overtook us, that made it necessary to pitch our tent; and in the cool of the next morning we made a thirteen-mile trek over hard ground once more. The sensation of feeling one's feet firmly strike the ground and the effect of making a full swinging stride was so exhilarating, after the cramped manner of walking in the sand, that we felt able to walk any distance. With a frugal meal of corn—all that remained in the way of food—clothed in our best—shirt-sleeves and much worn and frayed moleskins—clean, yet comparing poorly with even the Mongwatos we met on the road for appearance, we started ahead of the cart, and walked over the intervening distance to Shoshong.

The good traders of Shoshong were much surprised to see us again, as they had heard disastrous news of our attempts to get up the Chobe river from Westbeeche, who had informed them of the common report that Matambanja's people had destroyed the expedition to a man, a rumour that caused Mr. Jan Veyers to congratulate himself on his foresight in having left us where he did. Mr. Erickson, an enterprising trader from Walfish Bay and Damaraland, who had passed with a troop of cattle from that country for Kimberley, also assured them that we could never have crossed the desert from the Chobe to Indala's, and that even in case we had, Mr. Indala bore a reputation that precluded the return of any whites who visited him with such a small party as accompanied us. We heard that suspicion of spying out the country had also fallen on Selous, who was then shooting in the Mababe district, an old hunting-ground of his. Hearing that a troop of natives from the lake were looking for white men with Matabeles, Selous decided to vacate the position without loss of time, and hurried off to his protector and friend, Lobengula, with his suspected people, leaving the wagons to follow on at greater leisure.

Khama no sooner heard of our arrival than he sent for

me, and begged that I would give him and his councillors an account of our journey, which by the help of an interpreter I proceeded to do. They sat quietly listening to the short narrative I gave of our adventures, and the indignities we had suffered from Matambanja and Indala, until I had finished, when Khama paid us the compliment of saying, 'You have gone far and behaved like men!' He then asked with a meaning smile if Indala possessed much cattle or ivory, to which from personal knowledge I was obliged to answer in the negative. 'It is a pity,' he said, 'or else you might be avenged. Finished!' This being his usual expression to denote an interview at an end, I left the Kodthla, and paid a visit to Mr. Hepbourne, the missionary at Khama's. To Mr. Hepbourne's instruction is due much of the education and refinement in Khama's manners, the missionary for many years having been his tutor and adviser. Not having met him before, I introduced myself, and he kindly took me into his house, where he introduced me to his wife and charming little children. Mrs. Hepbourne gave me a large cake, and with this spoil I returned to find our camp fixed, and a general invitation for our party to all meals from the kind-hearted traders, Messrs. Clarke, Whitely, Dawson, and Musson, who kept different stores within the precincts of Shoshong. They were all much interested to hear our story.

To our inquiries as to what chances there were of reaching the coast, we heard, much to our chagrin, that there would be no wagons going out for two months or more, and that we should have to wait that time before being able to get away.

While strolling about next day I met a stranger, with whom I got into conversation. He told me that he was leaving with empty wagons for Ermelo in the Transvaal that very evening; and if we were anxious to get out he would take us for a small consideration, provided our luggage was light in the true sense of the word. I rushed off to camp, and settled up all our little affairs, bidding a hasty farewell to Khama and all the traders, whom I reproached for not informing me of this opportunity to get out. I was met with the good-humoured reply,

‘Oh, we don’t count him; we want you to stay with us for a bit.’ We paid off the good Paul with many extra presents, and gave him messages to our Swangie boys, when he should meet them again; for he, after all, decided to return to their country, the ties of matrimony and paternity proving stronger than his desire to visit Natal. I also gave Franz a rifle as a souvenir of the trip, and before we had time to catch breath we were comfortably seated on the box of a splendid wagon with a fine span of oxen trotting before us in great haste to catch up to the other wagons belonging to our host that had gone ahead. The Boer who had so opportunely undertaken to convey us from Mongwato was the well-known Piet Grobelaar, a man who conducted a large trade of horses and other wares in exchange for cattle in the interior. It appears from what he told us that he had brought in an extra large troop of five hundred horses the year previous to Khama at Shoshong in exchange for cattle, and that most of the horses had died from horse-sickness. There was a misunderstanding between himself and Khama about this matter, because Khama asserted that the horses were supposed to be guaranteed salted, while Grobelaar reasonably disclaimed any responsibility for so large a troop on such a precarious question. Of course Grobelaar was much dissatisfied, and, to the great annoyance of Khama, he had this year betaken himself into Lobengula’s country with his wares instead of bringing them to Shoshong. His visit now was made with the intention of trying to obtain a settlement for the disputed question of last year’s horses, which Khama had refused. It was a severe blow to Grobelaar, who had strained his resources and credit to the utmost to raise so large a troop of horses for Khama; and he was now returning without payment for the horses that had died, much put out how to face his creditors in the Transvaal.

Whatever private understanding there was between Khama and Grobelaar, I feel constrained to believe that Khama imagined at least that he was acting rightly; for a more just native I never met, although no white man in possession of his full

senses would ever have dreamed of guaranteeing that number of horses brought in fresh from the Transvaal against horse-sickness. Grobelar, however, now in his anger believed that Khama intended to do him harm, a not quite unreasonable idea; for Khama naturally wished to keep the trade from going to Lobengula, who, thus fortified with horses and other goods, might now feel himself strong enough to attack his neighbour, while Khama hitherto had been in a position with his cavalry, or rather mounted shooters, to keep any offensive conduct on Lobengula's part in check.

For such reasons Grobelar was anxious to get over the border into the Transvaal without delay, and I have a good suspicion that some other private events had transpired at the Matabele court, secretly made known to Khama by his spies, which rather accelerated Grobelar's movements. However, this was all in our favour, for he could not travel too rapidly for our wishes or convenience.

It is not necessary to here record all the incidents of this well-known route; therefore I will confine my remarks to the most prominent events that occurred. In a couple of days' very hard trekking with the fresh oxen we reached the Crocodile Limpopo river, which Grobelar was anxious to cross before the water from several heavy thunderstorms we had noticed to the east should flow down to the drift he intended to use at the junction of the Mathlabaas river. He and I walked ahead from the last outspan to test the crossing of the rapidly rising stream. A plucky old native we picked up living near the drift volunteered for one shilling to cross with us as guide. We hurriedly undressed, a manœuvre in which the native got a long start of us, for he simply had to undo the belt round his waist and drop the rags pendent therefrom on to the ground. As we entered the yellow, murky-looking current I asked the boy how about crocodiles. He answered, 'We don't speak of them in times like these,' and plunged into the water breast-high: we followed him, and found that the crossing was practicable if we packed our few belongings on to the stretcher fixed across

the middle of the wagons, which now came up. We had overtaken Grobelar's other two wagons the previous day. Seizing a long rope we tied it to the heads of the leading oxen of the first span, and with this in our hands forded the river. By hauling at their heads we pulled the span with the wagon in their wake safely across, and the steep bank was negotiated with safety. Repeating this operation twice more, we got our caravan safely across before the rising river was too deep to interfere with us.

Grobelar told us that two years previous to this he was taking thirty-six merino sheep to Khama over this drift. The river was full at the time, and he was anxious to deliver them quickly, fearing that during any delay they might die on his hands. He packed them into an empty wagon, closed at both ends by a network of riems, which he tied across the openings to prevent the sheep from being washed out by the rapidly flowing deep water. As the wagon pushed down the steep bank on the Transvaal side, three of the sheep were precipitated into the stream, and carried away by the current, while now that the wagon was in the river he had to hurry the remainder across, and could not spare time just then to save those floating away. In a few moments he noticed a crocodile with its head exposed swim up from the mouth of the Mathlabaas river, two hundred and fifty yards below. It swam up stream, a good three-knot current at the time, with absolute ease, as if in still water, and approaching the drifting sheep with a spring that lifted its body nearly half out of the water, seized one and disappeared under the surface, holding the sheep in its jaws. A few yards below it appeared again to breathe, holding the sheep high out of the water, and then bobbed below again. This ducking it repeated until out of sight round the bend of the river. While Grobelar was shouting to his boys on the bank to get the guns and shoot the crocodile, another one stole out of the pool at the junction, and in the same manner swam off with another sheep. By this time the boys had got the guns and opened fire on crocodile number two, which they hit several times with bullets; but it held its

own with the sheep in its jaws, and disappeared. Later, when the cargo was landed on the other side, they rescued the third sheep, still floating untouched down the river. Next day they explored the banks below for the crocodiles and for the carcasses of the sheep. About two miles below they found the one crocodile lying by the side of the untouched carcasses of the two sheep in the reeds, but it fled at their approach, before they could get a shot at it; the other crocodile was nowhere visible, and probably had died from the effects of the bullets he had received.

This watching by carcasses is a well-authenticated habit of these reptiles, who, not possessed of incisive teeth, are unable to eat the flesh of an animal too large to swallow at a gulp unless it is softened by decomposition, when they are able to tear the particles from each other with their claws and conical-shaped teeth. The tradition amongst the natives that crocodiles hide their food amongst the stones and reeds, or place great weights of stones on carcasses under water to prevent them from floating away, is therefore based upon some fact.

While crossing the river we sustained various breakages in our hauling gear, to repair which we had to send men five miles ahead to Khamani, Khama's brother. When the boys returned we trekked along through wet country, caused by the overflow of the Mathlabaas river, to his station.

Khamani was living on the Transvaal side of the river with his followers, all of whom were discontented with Khama's rule. Khamani received us in a friendly manner, sending gifts of milk, honey, etc., to Grobelar, whom he knew and esteemed highly. He was the proud possessor of a single tame ostrich, which strolled inquisitively around our camp, a perfectly miserable object; for Khamani, for the sake of the value of its feathers, with true savage instinct had plucked every single feather off the bird to sell, and now it stalked about naked, exposed to the inclement weather with all its changes, a huge dirty grey living monument to Khamani's foolish greed.

We bought two young leopards from Khamani to take home with us; but these little demons were so unmanageable, taking no nourishment, and ferociously biting and scratching at any intruding hand that supplied them with food, that at last, in despair of bringing them out alive, we knocked them on the head.

Some young wild ostriches also fell to our lot by purchase from a 'Vaalpens bushman,' who had watched their hatching in the bushy plain, and seized them as soon as they were out. They had grown to the size of swans when we got them, and proved amiable travelling companions, at times emitting a soft 'coo' like the exaggerated note of doves.

Khamani, unlike the brothers of most native kings, had not been executed as a probable rival to his brother on the latter's accession to the throne of Mongwato. He, however, lost no opportunity of making himself unpleasant to Khama, using Khama's legislation regarding the drink question as a strong lever to obtain supporters of his pretensions to the throne. Khama had passed a law prohibiting the importation or use of alcoholic liquors in his country, and had even gone so far as to interdict the manufacture of native beer within his boundaries. Of course there were many malcontents who objected to this law, and these Khamani assembled around himself as subjects. They never lost an opportunity of making themselves objectionable to Khama, who on several occasions had given his brother high office in the land, but was compelled by the latter's behaviour to dismiss him. On one occasion Khama had actually, while on a visit elsewhere, allowed him to govern the country, a very dangerous experiment: for when Khama returned, his brother endeavoured to retain the government, but had to retire without fighting, as his supporters failed him at the critical moment. While in retirement Khamani endeavoured to raise an insurrection; but before his plans were well matured Khama rode to his camp with a bodyguard of twenty-five men for the road, and when near Khamani's station ordered his men, all but one, to remain behind, while he rode into his brother's council attended by only this one man to

hold his horse. With no other weapon than a little stick in his hand, he confronted his brother and his rabble, quietly telling them that he was tired of all the trouble they caused, and that they had better now leave his country and join their friends the Boers, for he would not endure them in his country any longer; then, turning sadly away, he mounted his horse and rode home, none of Khamani's men having the pluck to touch the man they were actually conspiring against when he was at their mercy.

Khamani obtained permission from the Boer Government to enter into and occupy that portion of the Transvaal where he now resides.

The next few miles of our journey were made through swamps sustained by overflowing water from the Mathlabaas river, which we had to cross often through four feet of water and rushes.

On December 25th Grobelar exchanged one of his wagons for twenty-five Damara oxen that had reached this country, *via* Lake Ngami, in Erickson's care. These cattle were gracefully light of body, and fleet of limb, almost like game, in strong contrast to the enormous, large-horned, heavy beasts, weighing over one thousand pounds, that Grobelar had brought from Mongwato with him. The trader who sold these oxen to Grobelar informed us that his principal had been fined £411, 19s. 6d. for endeavouring to smuggle the goods he conveyed through the Transvaal without paying the necessary duties for them to that state.

We passed round the Modikel or Marikel Hill, an extremity of the Waterberg range of mountains, and, continuing along its eastern slope, camped near a large cave in the mountain called Marimathla, where the natives are accustomed to conceal themselves during war time.

The wonderful fertility of this district was demonstrated to us by a Boer called Stephanus Marks, who from his gardens fetched us green mealies on the cob, already fit to eat, planted in the soil not over two months before.

Our next stay was at a relation of Grobela's, Mr. Potgieter, a gentleman who possessed a fine farm and large herds of cattle grazing on the excessively luxuriant vegetation in the neighbourhood. Mr. Potgieter complained bitterly of the unhealthiness of this district for horses in particular and cattle in general. Sheep would not thrive at all on the rank grass clothing the slopes of the Waterberg, while cattle were subject to red water, a disease that played havoc with newly arrived cattle until they became acclimatised. His opinion was that the disease was caused by the consumption of some unknown plant or root that carried the stricken cattle off in three days or less after they became ill. The country was exceptionally good for agriculture, but as there was no market it was almost useless producing more crops than were required for the family. He was very anxious to try tea-growing, and later I sent him some seed of this plant from the plantations near Durban, which I heard subsequently had thriven well.

While resting at Potgieter's farm, I paid a visit to the neighbouring hot sulphur springs near Hattensdorp. These boiling springs, of large dimensions, were situated in a marsh at the foot of the sloping mountain, and seemed to be extensively patronised as baths for invalids by the Boers, who, we were informed, flocked here from all parts of the Transvaal in the winter months to recruit their health. These baths bore a special reputation for the cure of rheumatic complaints, and, judging from the numerous little trenches leading from the fountains to convenient cavities dug in the road, covered over with grass huts, where the sufferers bathed, the place must have had a good many visitors at times. It being the wrong season of the year, there were no bathers at the spot when we visited it. We were told that an unfortunate young giraffe, the property of a hunter, who brought it here to sell during the winter, being scared by the barking of some dogs at his heels, jumped into one of the boiling springs in its fright, and expired from the effects of the heated water before it could either make its way out or be rescued.

We left Potgieter, well supplied with bread and ox biltong by the generosity of our host, and passed on along the Pilands river, through large native gardens of corn, often standing six feet and more high, already rich in ear; and, crossing a large turf flat, entered the treeless high veldt once more, never having been out of sight of bush since we left Pretoria on our way up country.

We passed the farm of one Christian Rasmus, one of the Trek Boers, under Schmidt and Kreeeling, who had returned from Lake Ngami overwhelmed with the obstacles before the trek. He expressed great satisfaction at being back in the Transvaal.

On the 4th we camped at Die derik, Muller's farm: he is the possessor of a corn-grinding mill driven by water-power, and a beautiful flower-garden shaded by fine oak-trees.

On June the 6th we arrived at Piet Grobelaar's farm, St. Helena, fourteen miles from the village Ermelo, in the Transvaal, having made a record journey for speed from Mongwato.

Like everything else about Piet Grobelaar, we found his farm, although quite of recent occupation, in excellent order. In partnership with his father-in-law, Mr. Christian Bossoff, he had already built a fine house, and cultivated many acres of soil. Amongst their most valued possessions they numbered a large herd of springbok, and a smaller one of blesbok, both strictly preserved. A portion of the farm was set aside for the sole occupation of these buck, and never was invaded under any pretence whatever. This valley was called a 'wild kraal,' game preserve, and the game knew as well as possible that their safety lay in remaining within the bounds of this mystic valley. It was permitted, and even desirable, to occasionally shoot at a buck that strayed far beyond the precincts of the kraal, when it was quite laughable to see them scurry off to the place of immunity, knowing well that safety lay there.

Mr. Bossoff, a rare old sport, challenged me, for the price of a pipe, to shoot springbok against him; limit, two shots each. We watched till a troop of about ten bucks strayed some distance out

of the kraal, and then, getting within four hundred yards on the open flat, the old sportsman offered me first shot, which I refused. He then fired and missed, having slightly overjudged the distance, when I got a hopeless cross-running opportunity and refused to fire. The buck then turned, running straight away from us in a stripe, when Bossoff again missed, scattering the buck, which sprang away from the dust of the bullet. I was following the distance, shifting my sight as they ran along, and just as they bumped sides in coming together, a bullet from my long rifle, the last I fired out of her, reached them. We could not see the result, it being too far to discern a buck lying in the grass, but Bossoff declared he heard the bullet clap, and on walking over we found a dead springbok, which we took home with us. There was a general smile, when we approached the house with only one buck, from all the young people and children, for Bossoff, like a good Boer, had many olive branches. One buck for three shots looked much as if 'Pa' had won the pipe. Great, therefore, was the surprise when 'Pa' refused the congratulations, and, with a quiet laugh, said, 'The jonge Rooi Nek has beaten me. Put you are right, hy kan skiet.' (Rooi Nek, once a term of bantering endearment, has unfortunately lost its charm since it has been converted into a term of dislike by the Boers for the foreigner.) We left the buck, according to custom, in the hands of the women, and sitting in the front of the house were enjoying a pipe and an excellent cup of coffee after our tramp, when one of the daughters came running to us, with the words, 'Pa, that is a spook (ghost) buck, it has no bullet wound. How came it to die?' True enough, when we went to the back of the house the women were all looking at it askance, with the skinning knives still bright in their hands. 'Where is the wound?' they all asked. With a peculiar smile old 'oom Christian,' as we had already learned to call him, told the women to go away while he investigated more closely, but spite of the minutest examination he could not find the particular mark he was looking for. As the reader must know, I may as well say at once he was looking under the

tail of the buck, but not a trace of the bullet was visible. Spitting on the ground, the usual way of expressing abhorrence, oom Christian was going off to wash his hands after touching so foul a thing, when one of his Hottentots said, 'Maar kyk, hy is op de pünt van de hoorn geskiet.' 'Why, look, he is shot on the point of the horn'; and, sure enough, there was a little, blue, oval splash of lead on the tip of the horn: the shot had broken the buck's neck by the concussion! The whole matter was put right in a twinkling, and we had delicious springbok fry for lunch.

The unaffected cordiality of this good family, and I may say, that of all the Boers we met on the road, who, after the first shyness of the introduction had worn off, received us in their midst, and gave us of their best, irrespective of nationality, demonstrated the kindness inherent in the hearts of the Boers in general. There are, undoubtedly, instances of Boers meeting strangers at their homesteads with an inhospitality almost amounting to hatred, but these are found near the thoroughfares to the gold-fields in the land, where evil acts, committed by the lower classes of travellers, have left the germs of this reception of others behind them. If my ten years' residence amongst them entitles me to express an opinion on this point, I may say that, with few exceptions, I have found the Boer hospitable and kind.

Piet Grobelaar had by his kindness on the journey so endeared himself to us, that I made him a present of my long rifle, which put the bullets just where you wanted them, and my revolver. For our further journey he supplied us with a cart and oxen, well stored with food of the best, for had not his wife and her mother been baking the crispest of rusks for us two days ago? And beef biltong? why, the house was full of it! Sugar, coffee and tea were trifles that every one must have on the road, so no expostulation, if you please, but do as you are told, and be quiet. Only be careful of the oxen, and give the boys a pass back from Dundee, in Natal, where they are to take you to, and 'Alles ist recht, so kom en eat' before you start. What could one

do but tender best thanks for such liberality, and accept the kindness in the spirit it was offered? With many promises to come and see them again if ever our road lay in that direction, a promise I have subsequently kept, we started on the 9th, and by travelling along the ordinary route, reached Dundee without momentous events, on the 15th of January 1885.

That we made this phenomenally rapid journey through the interior is due to the many favourable conditions under which we travelled, and a succession of events that kept us on the move almost from start to finish.

A few parting words, relating to Grobelar's unhappy fate, will be permitted by the indulgent reader.

Two years later Grobelar came to me with the request that I should join him on a trip to Matabeleland. He was taking his wife and family with him on a visit to Lobengula, who had begged that he would show him this favour, that he might have an opportunity of paying his respects to the wife of a man whom he valued so highly. In the course of our arrangements, before I had decided to go, we visited Mr. Paul Kruger, the President of the Transvaal, with regard to some details of the trip, and I was preparing to make up my mind to accompany Grobelar, when the phenomenal richness of the gold finds, near what is now Johannesburg, diverted my attention, and I remained to go gold-grabbing instead, much to Grobelar's disgust.

He reached Matabeleland with his family, met with a good reception from Lobengula and his people, and returned well satisfied with the results of the trip, passing on his way back through a corner of Khama's country for convenience of the roads. At this point, Grobelar, suspecting danger, had hurriedly taken the wagon, with his wife and children, ahead into the Transvaal, leaving behind the other wagons, for which he returned when once his family were safely over the border. Khama, trying to win Grobelar's affections back, I honestly believe, sent twenty-five men to arrest him with orders to bring him to Shoshong. Grobelar was with the hindmost wagons when the Mongwatos arrived, and, when he refused their request

to accompany them, acting under their instructions, they endeavoured to seize him, whereupon he, in self-defence, drew his revolver, the one I had given him, and fired on his assailants, who beat him unmercifully with sticks about the ribs, and also fired at him, breaking his leg near the knee. Appalled at what they had done, for probably their orders did not warrant such violence, they decamped, and left Grobelaar for dead on the ground. His men carried him to the wagon, where he recovered consciousness, and sent for his wife, as he felt himself dying. When she came a day later he was in a high state of fever and spitting blood, for his lungs were injured by the terrible blows the Mongwatos had dealt him on the chest, and probably a broken rib had pierced into the lung as well. He expired shortly afterwards in the arms of his wife, who, when she told the story, said she was of opinion that had a doctor been there, he might, perhaps, have cut off the mortifying leg, but could not have saved him from the constant spitting of blood that caused his end.

The Transvaal Court held an inquiry into this matter, with the result that Khama pays Mrs. Grobelaar £200 a year, and the Transvaal another £200 a year, as indemnity for this outrage.

Grobelaar's death had more significance for the Boer party than is generally known or understood.

A P P E N D I X

WESTBEECH gave me such information as he had gathered with regard to the history of the tribes inhabiting the Barotzi Valley. The first clear statement out of the chaos existing amongst the ever-warring tribes in this country dates from the time immediately previous to the invasion of the Barotzi Valley by Sibotwana, when the country was inhabited by people who claimed to come from the East and established themselves in the Zambesi Valley, by conquest. They subjugated the Mabunda, Matotela, and the Magoma tribes then living there under the collective name of Barotzi, levying tribute from them all, which their successors claim at the present moment. Ruled by King Maritela, they occupied the country until the arrival of Sibotwana, a ferocious Basuto chief, who left his country about 1843, owing to disturbances with his brother Moshesh, then king of the Basutos, and came through the southern Kalahari with a large following of Moshesh's malcontents mounted on their famous ponies. At Lake Ngami they dispersed the people of the lake, called Batauwana, under the regent Machalakiwe, took the future king, Letchulatebe, then a boy of nine years old, prisoner, and proceeded on their way to the Chobe, *viâ* Mababe. Letchulatebe managed to escape from his captors, and hid with some friendly natives in the reeds, until later he became king of the Batauwana. Sibotwana settled on the Chobe with a Mashubia chief called Litchuani, who, afraid of Sibotwana's power, received him in a friendly manner. Impelled by the desire for cattle, possessed in great numbers by the Batoka eastwards on the Zambesi, Sibotwana successfully raided that country, returning with many women and cattle to Litchuani on the Chobe, and then, actuated by the same motive, raided the Barotzi Mabunda Valley, gaining several victories over Maritela's people after some hard-fought battles. Determined to establish his rule in this country he remained in the Barotzi Valley, and when Maritela died shortly afterwards was gladly hailed as king by all the tribes occupying the valley, to whom he gave the collective name of Makololo. Now peace was established, Sibotwana returned to the Chobe and built the town of Linyanti, from whence he exercised his rule, assisted by some of his own people who came from Basutoland with him, and whom he distributed throughout the valley as subordinate chiefs.

Before Sibotwana built the town of Linyanti, and while he was still resident in the Barotzi Valley, a large army of Matabele, sent by

their king Mosilikatze—Umziligazi—were assisted by the treacherous Mashubia chief Litchuani to attack Sibotwana. Litchuani ferried his new allies over the Zambesi and guided them to the attack, but the wily Sibotwana retired with all his people and food to some large islands in the Zambesi. Litchuani, fearing for himself, deserted his new allies, leaving them to shift for themselves, and returned to his home. The Matabele army suffered great privations from hunger, and many were poisoned by eating manioc, a plant they were unaccustomed to, growing in the deserted gardens. They did not know how to prepare in the proper manner by soaking it in water and fermenting it for several days to make it fit for food.

Sibotwana followed the Matabele down the river in boats, inflicting great loss on the retreating army, as far as a place called Gatonga, thirty miles above Seshek on the Zambesi, where the Matabele made a stand. In great straits, the Matabele, who are not a water-loving people, nor accustomed to the use of canoes, accepted the offer of some Mashubia to ferry them across the Zambesi to the south bank. But these, still friends to Sibotwana, brought the Matabele army on to a large island in the river which the latter believed to be the mainland, and there left them to starve. The Matabele, in great straits, devoured their shields and sandals, but, to their honour be it said, did not devour one another. A few survivors were rescued at last in a very emaciated condition by Sibotwana, and these and their descendants are living to this day as slaves in the Makololo country. This must have taken place in the early forties of our century.

Again the enterprising Umziligazi sent an army to vanquish Sibotwana, whose power he could not brook so near his north-west boundary. Although the army was repulsed with heavy loss, Sibotwana's life was in great danger during one phase of the battle, and he was obliged to jump into the Zambesi out of his canoe to save himself; and he would have inevitably been drowned had not a chivalrous Barotzi native, named Mashoan, plunged in to his rescue and helped him to swim to the north bank of the river.

These two attacks by the Matabele were made shortly after one another, and, failing in their object, Umziligazi left Sibotwana in peace.

Sibotwana now proceeded to settle accounts with the treacherous Litchuani, whose village he surrounded with his forces one night, assegaing the chief and all the males except a few who escaped under the favourable cover of darkness. The women and children he incorporated into his tribe on his return to the Barotzi Valley, where he found all peaceful and quiet.

Sibotwana died a natural death at Linyanti, the town he loved most of all in the conquered territory.

Sekeletu, his only son, then a man of about thirty years old, succeeded as ruler of the country, and, imbued with the warlike spirit of his great father, waged war against the Batauwana under Letchulatebe, who had meanwhile attained his kingdom with his majority, incensed because the latter would not recognise him as paramount chief over the Lake District and grant him the usual tribute demanded in recognition of his supremacy. He succeeded in raiding many cattle, but returned without any other decided result from Lake Ngami, and now sought to subjugate the Damaras on the west. Meeting with severe opposition from the warlike Damaras, Sekeletu was glad to return to Linyanti with such cattle as he could raid on the route.

For a complete history of Sekeletu's doings, I must refer the reader to the work of his friend, Dr. Livingstone, as Westbeeck could only give me these outlines of Sekeletu's reign.

One strong feature of the Basuto occupation is that they left their language behind them, and it is owing to this fact that Livingstone, who was qualified in the Basuto language, gained so much influence amongst the Barotzi.

Sekeletu was killed by a fall from his horse, and there being no direct legitimate successor at his death, Sekeletu's throne was claimed by Mbololo, his uncle. The Makololo, however, were dissatisfied with this, as Mbololo was disliked and feared for his cruelty and tyrannical ways. But taking advantage of some dissensions amongst the Makololo, Mbololo collected all his hangers-on and swooped down on his enemies, killing all who were unfavourable to him with assegai and kerrie (knobsticks). The Barotzi people, Batokas and others, seeking now to free themselves from the oppressive yoke of Makololo rule, united against Mbololo and killed him and his people in battle, following up their success by an onslaught on the remaining Makololo, whom they drove southward over the Chobe, seizing all the women, children, and cattle left by the fleeing Makololo. By common consent Sepopo, a Barotzi (Martotzi), son of Maritela, the original king before Sibotwana invaded the land, was established king of the Barotzi in Linyanti, firmly supported by the chiefs Silumba, Mashoan, Mevala, and other influential Barotzi chiefs, and also by the Bakota people, who were headed by their former chief Sipatwanyana. This took place about 1862-1863.

Recognised king, Sepopo now visited the towns his father formerly occupied on the Zambesi, Naliele, Libonda, Nalolo, and other places, murdering his three brothers whom he had gone to seek, to put them out of the way as possible claimants to the throne. He also demanded the continuance of tribute from Sipatwanyana, the Batoka

chief, who refused to pay, under the plea that the Batoka had never paid tribute to the Barotzi proper prior to the Basuto occupation, and only then to Makololo under the dynasty of Sibotwana, now extinct, adding a message that if Sepopo was anxious for Batoka tribute he had better come and fetch it. Angered by Sipatwanyana's message, Sepopo collected his men and advanced against the Batoka, killing poor Sipatwanyana and thoroughly subjugating the tribe, who pay tribute to the Barotzi to this day,

Returning to Seshek on the Zambesi, Sepopo called some Mashubia chiefs, who had supported Sipatwanyana in his arguments, to a great council, and had them murdered in cold blood, thus securing a volcanic peace, which he enjoyed until 1877, when many of his head men, hearing a rumour that Sepopo intended to have another gathering or council boding no good to themselves, attacked him at night.

Quite unprepared, Sepopo fled in the darkness down the Zambesi in a canoe, from Gatonga, where the attack took place, but not scathless, for one of his faithless bodyguard shot him through the right arm and the fleshy part of the chest as he entered the canoe. Severely but not mortally wounded, he reached the junction of the Chobe and Zambesi rivers in his canoe, and there for better safety took to the bush on the right river bank, making his way to the Victoria Falls, in hopes to reach Westbeeche, his old friend, at Panda Matenga. However, the inflammation of his wound, aggravated by unwonted exertion, took a bad turn, and he was obliged to rest at the Falls, while he sent his faithful page, who accompanied him in the flight, to Westbeeche at Panda Matenga, for assistance. But when Westbeeche arrived it was too late—mortification had done its work, and he expired miserably shortly after, hidden in a cave under a large stone, leaving a record of bloodshed behind him none the less terrible because of the circumstances that made this course necessary for his safety.

Ngwana Weena, Sepopo's nephew, succeeded to the throne, but when it became known that he intended to make a clean sweep of all the chiefs in the country, wishing to institute men of his own age in their places, they combined against him, and he was forced to fly. Passing Matambanja, who refused him assistance on the Chobe, he fled on to the Mujakunda people, to whom he made great promises, hoping for their help to reinstate him on the throne. Some Mashubia and Batoka also joined him, and then, rallying his forces at Seshek, this energetic tyrant marched against Lebossi, or Lewanika, as he is also called, who, being also a nephew of Sepopo, in the interim had been proclaimed king of the Barotzi by the people in Ngwana Weena's place. Lebossi met him with his troops at the Lumbi River, where a terrible battle was fought between these chiefs. Three times Ngwana Weena

forced Lebossi to retreat, fighting heroically against fearful odds, but, overwhelmed at last by superior numbers, his forces fled, and he, obliged to follow, crossed the Zambesi at the Nghambwe cataracts. Simbweye, the chief here in charge of the crossing, followed in the night, and with murderous assegai killed him, thus ending the career of one of the fiercest and boldest natives that ever trod the Zambesi Valley. This act firmly established Lebossi at Lee-a-Lui (*i.e.* where the sun shines) on the throne, and he rules the country to this day.

In 1882 Lebossi, to subjugate the Bashukulumbwe people dwelling on the Kafukwe river, went with twelve thousand men across the Looengwe river into that country, where he fought many battles victoriously, displaying great personal courage. The Bashukulumbwe, who are very rich in cattle, suffered heavily through this raid, losing some forty thousand head to their conqueror, who succeeded, spite of forced marches, in bringing home to the Barotzi Valley over twenty thousand head of his booty. We were told that the reason the Bashukulumbwe are so rich in cattle is that they rarely kill oxen for food; only on occasions of great ceremony, such as the death of a great chief, or other state occasions, is it permitted to slaughter their stock, which consequently increases to an enormous extent in this very healthy and fertile district.

Lebossi or Lewanika reigned in peace, after the disturbances of the last years, up to the date of our arrival in 1884. Lately I have heard that he is still in peaceful possession of his country, though much disturbed at the advance of the British South African Company into the adjoining territory, Matabeleland, and what he considers the betrayal of their king after all the kindnesses he has showered upon the whites.

The religion of the Barotzi much resembles that of all natives in South Africa in its form of 'ancestor worship.' They acknowledge a supreme being called Nyambwe, who sways their destinies, and to whom the spirits of their ancestors are supposed to appeal on behalf of the living, although they, like each tribe, may have a different manner of fulfilling the rites accorded to the spirits that influence their fates. When a chief dies, his people kill cattle over the grave, so that he shall have food on his journey, but the flesh of the cattle they devour themselves, arguing that the spirits of cattle alone suffice for the ghostly wants of the dead. They also build their towns round the chiefs' graves as an inducement for them to stay and protect them, and that their spirits may not be lonely. They consult these graves as oracles through the agency of priests, who profess to converse with the dead through a hole connecting the death chamber with the outer world. Carefully listening with one ear at the orifice, the priest, or witch-doctor, usually a wise and clever man, delivers the spirit-

messages with many solemn rites to the living, who accept and act on these dicta for good or evil without question, whether involving war or the murder of a relation, the site chosen for a new cornfield, or whatever else may be uppermost in their minds, affecting the daily existence of the national welfare.

The Barotzi are clever fishermen and expert navigators of the rapid Zambesi in their little hollow dug-outs, which they handle with an ease and grace that excite the admiration of the Matabele, who are by no means a water-loving people. They are also good agriculturists, winning Mabele corn, Mahuza millet, mealies, Indian corn, pistachio nuts, pumpkins, sugar cane, and native as well as sweet potatoes from their gardens. Native tobacco with a round leaf, and dacha, *cannabis indica*—which they also smoke—are objects of their extreme solicitude, judging by the care with which these are cultivated in separate little patches round their huts.

Their social life, according to civilised creed, leaves much room for improvement. Marriage and purchase of wives for cattle is a distinct feature of their domesticity, but it is no unusual occurrence for a man burdened with several wives to call to his assistance some willing youth to help in protecting his crops and family, who takes the place of auxiliary husband amongst the surplus wives, while the utmost harmony prevails under this new arrangement. To the traveller also is accorded the privilege, once prevalent in Europe, of hospitality at bed and board. This, if accepted, implies a claim on the favoured individual, who may any day expect a visit at his kraal from the 'amiable one' to ask for a share of any crops, blankets or beds he may possess. The custom, fully recognised, gives rise to no disagreeables, and, according to their views, contains no cause for the ill-feeling such behaviour would be sure to excite amongst any other tribes living in South Africa. They are affectionate parents, decking the children out with beads and brass armlets, etc.; but when twins are born, it is related that the last arrival is sacrificed to their belief that this is unholy, and the poor little mite is thrown to the crocodiles in the Zambesi.

Amongst the lower classes and slaves, the word morality conveys no meaning whatever; therefore the less said about this the better.

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